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BEATRICE D'ESTE AND HER COURT

CRISTOFORO ROMANO : BEATRICE D'ESTE.
Louvre Gallery.

Frontispiece.

BEATRICE D'ESTE AND HER COURT

BY

ROBERT DE LA SIZERANNE

TRANSLATED BY

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CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction 9

Foreword 15

FIRST PART

BEATRICE D'ESTE

Chapter I.—A Bust 21

Chapter II.—A Woman 38

Chapter III.—A Fetish 92

SECOND PART

ISABELLA OF ARAGON

Isabella of Aragon 119

THIRD PART

BIANCA SFORZA DE SAN SEVERINO

Bianca Sforza de San Severino 159

FOURTH PART

BIANCA MARIA SFORZA, EMPRESS OF GERMANY

Foreword 187

Chapter I.—At Milan, The Princess . . . 193

Chapter II.—At Innsbruck, The Empress . . 220

Appendix I.—Genealogical Summary of the Sforzas 257

Appendix II.—Genealogical Summary of the Aragons 260

Index 263

1725

ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATE I

CRISTOFORO ROMANO : BEATRICE D'ESTE . *Frontispiece*
Louvre Gallery

PLATE II

FACING PAGE

BOLTRAFFIO : LUDOVIC SFORZA SURNAMED THE MOOR 30
Milan, Trivulzio Collection

PLATE III

BEATRICE D'ESTE PRAYING 50
Fragment of the picture called *La Pala Sforzesca* (Brera Gallery, Milan)

PLATE IV

TOMB OF LUDOVIC THE MOOR AND BEATRICE D'ESTE, BY CRISTOFORO SOLARI, SURNAMED THE GOBBO . . 88
Chartreuse at Pavia

PLATE V

BOLTRAFFIO : PRESUMED PORTRAIT OF ISABELLA OF ARAGON 119
Ambrosian Library, Milan

PLATE VI

BIANCA SFORZA DE SAN SEVERINO 159
Ambrosian Library, Milan

PLATE VII

FACING PAGE

AMBROGIO DE PREDIS : BIANCA MARIA SFORZA, EMPRESS OF GERMANY 187

Arconati-Visconti Room, Louvre

PLATE VIII

PORTRAIT OF MAXIMILIAN, KING OF THE ROMANS . . 234

Municipal Gallery, Vienna

INTRODUCTION

THIS IS A GROUP OF PORTRAITS of the Italian Renaissance, which I have endeavoured to illustrate with the assistance of documents of the period and relics of the places where the models of the portraits lived. The personages thus brought into the modern limelight have not been selected for the interest of their adventures or the qualities of their mentalities. When I commenced the studies, I was ignorant as to whether my subjects had had any adventures, or whether even they had possessed a mentality capable of being discerned and analyzed through the spread of years. All I knew of them was their masks, but those masks were modelled or painted by some of the most discerning artists who set about the translation of a human physiognomy, at that very part of the fifteenth century when a work of art retains the savour of a discovery in the domain of Nature, and has not become something quite distinct from a lifelike sketch. They are thus richer in physiological revelations and fuller of mystery than many more idealistic or more personal interpretations of the human face ; hence, their singular power of fascination. Everyone is acquainted with the bust of Beatrice d'Este in the Louvre, and the supposed profile of Bianca Sforza, in the Am-

brosian Collection. Visitors to the latter gallery must have also seen the crayon portrait presumed, for a long time, to be that of Isabella of Aragon, "the most unhappy of women." Habitués of the Louvre have known for years the portrait of Bianca Maria Sforza, wife of the Emperor Maximilian, and none have been able to pass it by with indifference; but the lives, destinies and morals of those faces, known to everyone, were an enigma to most of us. For the solution of such, it was not sufficient to trust to their physiological characteristics, however clearly defined these might be, but it was essential to confront them with the history and especially with the chronicles of their times, intimate letters, familiar images, and buildings. That is what I have done, impelled by a most natural kind of curiosity, such as causes us to exclaim, at sight of a fresh and radiant apparition, "Who is it?" Now, it has turned out that behind those masks, there were minds worthy of examination, revealed by adventures of interest, and it occurred to me that people would find my narrative entertaining. Thus the æsthetic study of fine portraits seen in collections was extended to cover a physiognomical analysis of faces, and ended up by becoming a chapter of history; and although the history of that period is a matter of real interest in itself, I must confess that without the testimony of Art, I should hardly have bothered myself over it.

It is Art indeed that brings us back to the history of Italy, and particularly to its history during the

fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Firstly, because it is Art that makes us familiar with the actors. We know the features of the Sforzas, Medicis, d'Estes, Gonzagues, Montefeltros, della Roveres, Aragons, Malatestas, many Doges, and at least one of the Borgias, as well as if we had lived at the same time as they. Secondly, it depicts even their most criminal features and magnifies even their most childish amusements. Many quite important details would seem pale and uninteresting to us because they have not been reflected in the eyes nor perpetuated by the hands of great artists. Similar acts of cruelty or duplicity may easily be found at the same period in the annals of the Muscovites, Bretons and Turks ; but what cannot be found, is that constant research of the Beautiful in its most fugitive attitudes and the care to commemorate the greatest nonentities by the splendour of imagery. When one comes to think of it, that is precisely the most distinguishing feature in the models of Pinturicchio or Leonardo and renders them so diverse. However much we may pretend the contrary, we really believe in the identity of the Real, the Beautiful and the Artistic ; hence our anxiety in the face of the personages of the Renaissance. That people who had such affection for the Beautiful in sculpture and colour, could be capable of perpetrating such prodigies of cruelty and moral abnormality, is such a painful surprise to us that we cannot believe it. We desire proofs, finding such a revelation to be an abuse of trust and a mystery that arouses our curiosity.

The reader must not expect to find here an elucidation of that mystery. This present collection of portraits contains no theories, but is confined to facts.

The pages of this work merely contain a description of four women who lived at the same time at the Court of Milan, in the latter part of the fifteenth century ; that is to say, in the most splendid days of Ludovic the Moor. The images which inspired these monographs have by no means equal claims on our interest. Two of them, the bust of Beatrice d'Este and the portrait of Bianca Maria Sforza, certainly represent those two princesses, and the resemblance is confirmed by a quantity of documentary evidence. A third portrait, that of Bianca Sforza of San Severino, is more open to discussion, although I am of opinion that its origin is certain, for reasons which I propose to give later. The fourth, that of Isabella of Aragon, Duchess of Milan, has no claim to memory other than purely sentimental reasons, or rather deductions. It has been thought that that wonderful face of mystery with its lowered eyes truly portrayed her, but her real character would certainly not have held the attention of visionaries for so long, although no great reliance can be put in the characteristics of that physiognomy. Moreover, it is the first two images, which are of undoubted authenticity, that are the subject of the longest studies in this volume.

The surest, or anyway the safest, way of learning the history of these women, is from the State

Archives of Milan, Modena and Mantua. These documents comprise private letters, letters from ambassadors to their Princes, and of Princes to Princes. The originals are still in existence, in exquisite handwriting, and looking as though the hand of Ludovic the Moor or the Fair Ferronière had just unfolded them. Other sources of information are the diaries kept sometimes by Statesmen, sometimes by private persons, and correspondence such as the letters of Balthazar Castiglione, reproduced since the eighteenth century. Finally, the sketches, plans, models, miniatures of the numerous Sforza manuscripts, crammed with illustrations of contemporary life, fragments of costumes and materials, and domestic articles preserved in museums and private collections, permit us to gather the meaning of the texts, and to identify the expressions employed with reality, without which history would be mere logomachy. From such sources those learned Italians, such as Luzio and Renier, Carlo Magenta, Calvi, Malaguzzi Valeri, whose works are well known, and a host of others who have entrusted the result of their researches to local reviews and special articles, have very largely drawn. Less certain are such historians as Guichardin and his successors, who besides, possess scarcely the value of the letter-writers from the point of view of the illumination of a face, inasmuch as they rarely describe traits of character, still less picturesque details. Machiavelli and Commynes alone are profuse in their description of character, but are these to be con-

sidered as historians? They are rather eye-witnesses, writing their memoirs, and soul-searchers—in a word, portrayers. Thus the aids which we nowadays use to understand these four portraits of women come from their contemporaries. As for the women themselves, although they actually belong to antiquity, they possess the fresh attraction of a beautiful débutante, since they have never been studied before. It has taken four hundred years for their histories to permeate the obscurity of legends, piles of literature, and man's indifference. They are like those far-distant stars who long ago left the place where we think they are, when their light falls upon us.

FOREWORD

IN ALL MUSEUMS of Natural History, there is a corner reserved to meteorites. It is neither the most attractive nor the most diverting to the eye ; a few black or greyish stones, shapeless and very ordinary-looking ; but imagination finds there the most enthralling perspectives. These stones belonged once to spheres we see shining above our heads at distances which appal the reason. We touch them, weigh them in our hands, walk round them and analyze them, for they are eye-witnesses of a world where we shall never get to. Scientists discover in them similar elements to those that constitute our own planet, for those far-off worlds are composed of the same substance as ours, and yet, life there is not the same. Different conditions of atmosphere and heat there produce different species of flora and fauna, maybe a different race of human beings, but what are they ? Wherein do they resemble us and wherein differ ?

Everyone of us must have asked himself that question at some time, but up to date, science has made no definite reply. Such replies as have been made are hesitating and misleading, all the more so since the key to the problem seems to be within reach but the actual solution unattainable.

Not only at museums is this impression to be gained, but also at art galleries.

At the Louvre, there is a room filled with stones that might well be named the "Meteorite Room." This is the Michel Angelo Room on the ground floor, recognizable from the fact that it communicates with the next room by the gigantic doorway of Cristoforo Romano, taken from the Palace of the Marchesino Stanga at Cremona. It is filled with Italian busts of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries; cunning and wrinkled-faced old men, sly and ambiguous-looking women, insolent soldiers, thoughtful men of genius — all masterpieces of Benedetto da Majano, Cristoforo Romano, and Laurana. These four-hundred-year-old masks are lit up by quite modern-day expressions, as though their originals were still living amongst us. There are no purely impersonal types there as there are in the Gallery of Antiquities. Each trait denotes passion, penchant, energy or anxiety, such as can be seen in modern sculpture.

Those minds were thus like ours, but their actions were different. Who nowadays would have the temerity to build himself a Palace like that of the old Strozzi, or betray and murder like Roberto Malatesta, or his father Sigismondo? Who would have the spirit to indulge in Art and War, Passion and Poetry, like Michel Angelo? Who could cram a lifetime of luxury, festivities, travels, and diplomacy into the period lying between her fifteenth and twentieth year, like Beatrice d'Este? They are contemporaries of a period so completely

vanished and remote that one doubts almost whether it ever existed. It seems almost as if they breathed a different atmosphere, grew quicker, looked higher, and fell lower. Does their physiological aspect deceive us, and must we believe that they were differently constituted from us, with other ambitions and other dreams? Or were they perhaps the same as us, desiring the same things, but faced with other conditions of life? Where does resemblance stop and dissemblance begin? Let us enquire of one of these busts. Maybe it will enlighten us!

FIRST PART

BEATRICE D'ESTE

Chapter I

A BUST[1]

THE HEAD is that of quite a young girl, one might almost say a child, of from fourteen to fifteen years of age, chubby-faced and alert, with short, tip-tilted nose, straight, narrow forehead, wide-open eyes and a sensual mouth whose ends seem lost in the swelling cheeks. The chest is narrow with collar bones close to the surface. The whole head is hooded with flattened hair, arranged in regular waves that hide the temples,

[1] Portraits of Beatrice d'Este, wife of Ludovic the Moor, Duchess of Bari, and later Duchess of Milan.

ORIGINALS :—

First.—The marble bust, period about the end of the fifteenth century, by Cristoforo Romano, bearing the inscription, DIVAE BEATRICI D'HERC. F. In the Michel Angelo Room, Louvre.

Second.—The statue on the marble tomb, placed beside that of Ludovic the Moor both by Cristoforo Solari, surnamed the Gobbo, in the left transept of the Carthusian Church at Pavia.

Third.—The left profile of a woman's head and shoulders, a painting attributed to Lorenzo Costa and Ambrogio de Predis. Ulysses Room, Pitti Palace.

Fourth.—The same face, with a few slight variations. Schikler Collection.

Fifth.—The kneeling figure in the painting entitled "La Pala Sforzesca," representing the Madonna with various saints, attributed sometimes to Zenale, at others to Bernardino dei Conti. Room XVII, Brera Gallery, Milan.

come down in wreaths to below the ears, and then with a sharp turn are swept up behind the head in such a way as to leave the nape of the neck bare, finally falling down the back in a cylindrical pigtail—the *cuazzone* of the Milanese—whilst two corkscrew curls float out beside the cheeks. No jewellery save a circular fillet—the *lenza*—that surrounds the top of the head as though to prevent the forehead from parting company with the occiput, and a close-meshed embroidered net at the back of the head as structure for the hair. On the left shoulder, a scarf worked in regular and intricate pattern, and on the bodice other and more picturesque embroidery, a broad ring wherein bindweeds are interwoven in graceful festoons, and where two hands shake a cloth full of mysterious dust over the wide-open calyx

Sixth.—The fresco medallion painted by Luini, shewing left profile, and bearing the letters, BEATR. Castello Sforcesco, Milan.

Seventh.—Medallion shewing the left profile carved over the centre of the arched gateway "della stanza del Lavabo." Carthusian Church, Pavia.

Eighth.—One of the medallions in miniature of the 1496 Sforza MSS., at the heading of the Cussago deed of gift. British Museum.

Ninth.—The medal (silver money) by Caradosso, the reverse of a medal of Ludovic the Moor. Bust shewing the left profile of Beatrice d'Este, with bare head, hair falling and caught back in a queue.

Tenth.—The figure of a kneeling woman (now almost effaced), painted by Leonardo da Vinci, on the right of the Montarfino "Crucifixion." Refectory of Sainte-Marie-des-Graces.

Eleventh.—The head and three-quarter bust of a woman, a drawing attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, with the inscription, BEATRICE ESTENSE. Uffizi.

of a flower. Finally, on the plinth are these words :—

DIVAE
BEATRICI
D'HERC. F.

clearly meaning Beatrice d'Este, second daughter of Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, shown previous to her marriage, i.e. before she had attained the age of fifteen and a half years, and between the years 1489 and 1490.

Such is one of the most suggestive sculptures that have come down to us through the ages.

A very delicate piece of statuary, it is best seen to advantage in the afternoon, when the scarf is thrown into relief and the hollow of the throat filled with shadow. As a carving, it is a cunningly wrought and marvellous work, with the edges of the lips finely chiselled, the eyelashes reduced to marble fins, the eyes carefully traced, and the join of the lips wonderfully hollowed out. It is full of life and though but a statue, we can deduce from it the whole pose of the body. Strongly hipped on the right side, the right shoulder is lowered and the left, or draped one, raised, the head turned very slightly from right to left, as is shown by the greater development of the right sterno-mastoidian and the right clavicle. Dissymmetry is arrested on the verge of becoming motion.

Vitality is indeed expressed by a variation, at first almost imperceptible, of the attitude likely

to be adopted by a body in complete repose, or which it might retain when dead. One muscle has a little more action than the next, but that is sufficient. From the moment the statue begins to lift an arm, stand on one foot, bend its back or, in a word, adopt a pose that cannot be maintained for long, it no longer represents life, but movement.

A plastic work may therefore present three forms of resemblance to the human model—shape, life, and movement. To reveal individuality, shape is not sufficient, whilst movement is too much. Life, no other, is best suited to a portrait, and this marble is replete with it. We know nothing about this girl, but we are already guessing her to be *Lieta di natura e piecavolina*, just as her husband will find her—vivacious, impetuous, neither dull nor brilliant, rather boyish than maidenly, looking as though she would give anything not to be portrayed in marble, but preferring rather to dance the *pavane* or the *mazzarocca*.

Here we have not only life, but mystery as well. What is the significance of that ring with its diamond setting, imprisoned in the coils of a finely drawn creeper, and what are those two hands, shaped as though making magic passes, doing inside that nuptial circle? Why are they holding a cloth, and what dust is it that falls from the cloth into the wide-open calyx of the flower posed ready to receive it?

What we do know, is that the pointed diamond stands for the d'Estes, their battle-cry being "*Diamante!*" We also know that a cloth held in

two hands cut off at the wrists, and representing a strainer, stands for Beatrice d'Este's fiancé, Ludovic the Moor. Five years before the date of this statue, he is portrayed wearing a cap decorated with a *buratto*. Finally, we know that the mystery of the fertilization of flowers was already suspected at that time, but that is the limit of our knowledge, unless it be that artists are great dreamers and are very fond of interweaving the real with the imaginary. Scientists ignore or seem to forget that very point, requiring a decorative motif to always mean something, and always to mean the same thing—a somewhat arbitrary demand on their part. With artists, symbols are like an extremely beautiful cup passed down from one generation to another, and into which each pours his favourite liquor. Sometimes even for a time, nothing is put into it, and it is merely preserved for the beauty of its shape, and maybe as time goes on, the fact that it was intended for the purpose of containing something, is altogether forgotten. All the same, a subtle and baffling perfume remains to hint to us in an indefinite way of our predecessors' favourite drinks. Therefore, think what you will of that ring of Beatrice d'Este's. A conception of the Renaissance is vast enough to hold all our theories, and it will be our sole chance of encountering that artist whose cunning tool carved that supple contour four hundred and thirty years ago.

Who is the author of this sculpture? There has been a great deal of controversy on the subject, the bust being an admirable one of very special con-

struction and without definite character. Courajod attributed it to Leonardo da Vinci, just as one might do to God, to whom all that is beautiful in the world must be attributed. The reasons he put forward were weak, and history passed them by. The bust is actually by an artist of Pisan birth and Roman upbringing; a lute player, singer and decorator; a courtier and man of letters who died young, who would in these days have been stigmatized with the title of "Amateur" or "Gentleman," and who figures in the dialogues of the *Cortegiano*; "that excellent master, Johan Cristoforo, who carried out the portrait of Your Ladyship in marble," writes Isabella d'Este to her sister Beatrice in 1491—that is to say, a year or so after the bust was completed. It is scarcely to be doubted that the work indicated by the famous Marquise is the one now before us.

It bears the mark of a discerning mind and of a delicate and decisive hand, and it possesses also another trait which is not in really pure taste. Note carefully the right side of the bodice, for there you will see a marble pin so well portrayed that it looks as though it could be detached, and on the scarf there are some adornments that would make an embroidress frantic with jealousy. Those are slight errors in bad taste that had already taken root since the fifteenth century in the conception of masterpieces, and which will, alas! bear fruit. The taste for optical illusion, the mania for over-doing decoration, is a thoroughly Italian taste. During the well-known epochs of Art, it is mastered

and held in control by genius, but already exists in the "larva state"—if one may so term it. As it is a racial trait, it will survive when genius has passed, and then it will dominate Art. When you visit the Campo Santo at Genoa and see the marble work cut in fretted patterns, divided into fringes, or carved in lacework; or when in the public squares in Italy you see the heroes of the *Rissorgimento* brandishing revolvers and other fire-arms, laboriously sculptured in marble, remember the pin on Beatrice d'Este's bust!

It may well be, of course, that she herself had that pin put there, desiring that the artist should portray it for the benefit of posterity. Anything is possible when it is a case of feminine wish, and there the critic cannot be too careful. Who can say what passed through that little head while the lute player was endeavouring to reproduce its childish traits? We have deciphered the symbols of the dress, but there is something deeper and more concealed than those symbols, and which, if we were better educated, would be revealed to us in the physiology of the face. Let us leave those hands pouring dust over the calyx of an unknown flower, and let us instead endeavour to guess what lies inside that head—that small recipient of ideas—what hopes, fears, nightmares, or wishes. We are not the first ones to put that question, for Ludovic Sforza, surnamed the Moor, Duke of Bari and Regent of the States of his nephew, the Duke of Milan, must have asked himself that same question about the end of the year 1490.

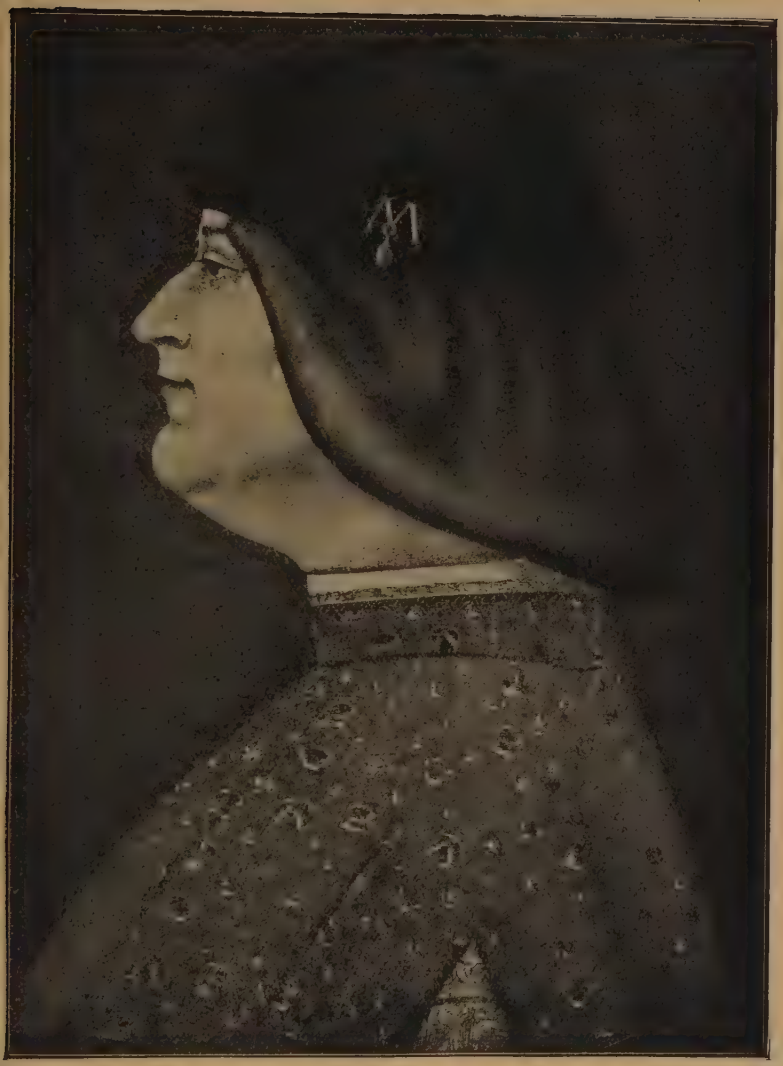
He was about to marry that little person, and although at that period a princess was obliged to blindly obey the State—and incidentally her husband—the Moor was far too circumspect not to wonder what she would be like when she was married. He was forty, whilst she was but fifteen and a half, and a mere child. There might be surprises in store for him when she grew up! His knowledge of her was limited to the one fact —on account of which he was marrying her— that she was the daughter of the Duke of Ferrara. He was not marrying her for love, for as a matter of fact it was not *her* hand he had asked for at all. He had asked for the hand of her sister, Isabella d'Este, her elder by a year; but unfortunately Isabella d'Este had already been promised a short while previously to the ugliest and bravest man in Italy, the Marquis Gonzague. The Moor, therefore, had to content himself with the younger daughter, who at that time was five years old, and had waited ten years for her. Such were frequently the circumstances attending the betrothals of princesses at that period. It might well happen, while they were still in the cradle, that their nurse might choose them a husband at the same time as their parents, in the person of someone already aged and serious. They then grew up with the idea impressed on them that there was no one else in the world possible for them, and were married without ever risking confusion between love and marriage. "There are three difficult things," Francesco Sforza, the

famous father of Ludovic the Moor, was wont to say : " buying a good melon, choosing a good horse, and picking a good wife. When a man wants to do one of these three things, he should commend himself to God, pull his cap over his eyes, and fling himself head first into the adventure." Ludovic the Moor, however, was not one to pull his cap over his eyes, whatever else he might do. He thought out his least acts carefully, and maybe that little figure seemed a disquieting enigma to him. From her point of view, what a future lay in store for her ! She was going to reign in fact, if not in title, over the finest State in Italy, and one of the richest in the world ! The State of Milan produced a revenue of thirty millions (ten times that of Mantua), an enormous sum for the period, and her personal income would be somewhere round about 114,000 francs per annum. This represented a truly royal fortune if one takes into account the purchasing value of money at that time. She would not reign in title because, her husband being only Regent, her cousin, Isabella of Aragon, who had been married a little while before to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, was alone entitled to be called Duchess of Milan. The young Duke, fully occupied by pleasure, was quite willing to cede first place to his uncle, Ludovic the Moor.

It was over another sovereign court—and perhaps the more brilliant of the two—therefore, that Beatrice would preside, alongside of her cousin (now become her niece) in the same *Castello* ; an

1735

elegant and formidable blend of palace and fortress, protected by a girdle of ditches with 62 drawbridges, 500 guards and 1,800 engines of war, decorated by artists from all over the world, filled with treasures, enlivened by the comings and goings of a population of 800 courtiers and staff, from State Secretaries, Coadjutors, Treasurers, Chaplains, *Registratori*, Guardians of the Archives, down to porters and ushers, the numerous officers of the Household, 40 officers attached to the Duke's person, 10 assistant officers, 10 under officers, 2 doctors, an apothecary, Masters of the Horse in charge of the stables that held 500 horses or mules for the Duke's private service, squires, personal attendants, clerks, waiters at table, 33 singers from over the mountains, turnkeys, cooks, bakers, tailors, 12 grooms, *stambecchini*, or huntsmen, falconers, fowlers, keepers, trumpeters, chair-porters, officers in charge of the plate—and a host of holders of other appointments, of which we have no conception to-day ; down to astrologers and mamelukes, without mentioning the Ladies of Honour and the pages especially attached to the Duchess' service. Details of that complicated and very cleverly worked out system should be followed in the magnificent work that Francesco Malaguzzi Valeri dedicated to the Court of Ludovic the Moor, and which he based on documents in the State Archives of Milan and Modena. Even to-day, when visiting those ruined palaces—but which have now been restored to the size and decoration of their period, and are all just as they



BOLTRAFFIO: LUDOVIC SFORZA SURNAMED THE MOOR.
Milan, Trivulzio Collection.

To face p. 30.

were when Beatrice made her entry—one understands the prestige that the Court of the Sforzas must have enjoyed amongst the Princes of Europe.

The palace that the newly married bride was going to live in was not the *Corte Ducale*, occupied by the Duke and Duchess of Milan, but the *Rocchetta*, a square building with finely columned entrances, built inside the Ducal Palace, which was itself enclosed inside the great rectangle of the fortress known as the *Castello*. It was the smaller of the two but the most comfortable, especially in winter, and the best defended ; in fact, the " Keep," and which contained the most precious possessions, the Archives and the treasure. The apartments reserved for the young wife were on the ground floor, on the left as one came from the *Place d'Armes*, i.e. from the town, and were bounded by the famous Treasure Tower. Traversing them, one can see that there was there every means for displaying the pomp and circumstance of a truly royal Court.

The man she was going to marry was surnamed the Moor. With the love of mystery which then pervaded the Courts of the Peninsula, one can imagine Beatrice's young companions, perhaps jealous of her sudden rise in the world, amusing themselves by trying to persuade her that she was going to marry a negro, aided by the fact that he was thus sometimes represented in pictures. The man, however, was too well known for her to long remain in that belief. He had nothing negroid, Turkish or Moorish, about him ; at the

most he had very dark brown hair and an olive tint of features ; he was even quite good looking. His official title was Ludovico Maria Sforza, Duke of Bari. As to his character and rôle, those were at the time an enigma which even we, who have had four hundred years longer to unravel it, have not yet succeeded in unravelling. He comes into history through an open door ; he goes out of it under a disguise, ever evading obstacles, seeking a place where he can slip through, and passing soft-footed, patient, subtle and silent, towards his goal. Scenting danger from afar, like a fox, he tries his hardest to avoid it, and, like a fox, he refrains from killing in his own neighbourhood. There is a lot of blood spilt in his family, but he takes care never to be there when it is spilt, and history can always plead for him absence, ignorance, and accident.

He is by no means destined to reign, for there are many lives between him and the throne. For example, there are his brother—the Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza, actually reigning and in the best of health—his brother's son, and the son of his brother's son. Besides these direct heirs to the throne of Milan, he has four brothers older than himself, and therefore possessing priority of succession should circumstances warrant it. Although a prince, he reigns over nothing, nor has he any chance of actually coming to the throne ; at the best he is but a "suspicion of princeliness." On the day after Christmas Day, 1476, on a snowy morning, it happens that his brother Galeazzo

Maria Sforza, leaving off his coat of mail "so as not to appear too fat," goes to attend mass at San Stefano, and on the very threshold of the church is assassinated by the daggers of some enlightened or ambitious persons who believe that their act will destroy tyranny and restore the glories of the Roman Republic. Thus the Moor's nephew, Gian Galeazzo, becomes Duke of Milan.

Three years later, in 1479, another brother of his, the Duke of Bari, chancing to die, he inherits his dukedom from him. Three years later again, in 1482, news comes of the death of Filippo, another brother; whilst Ottaviano, yet another brother, is drowned in the River Adda. His fourth brother, luckily for himself, having taken Holy Orders and therefore not being dangerous, runs no risks. Finally, in 1494, his nephew, the Duke of Milan, Gian Galeazzo, dies at the age of twenty-five, at the very critical moment when, Charles VIII having entered Italy, a firm man's hand is required to hold the reins of State. Neither the child left by his nephew, nor his niece—Isabella of Aragon, the deceased Duke's widow—are capable of doing this, so the throne being as good as vacant, the Moor slips into it quietly, making his bows to the world at large.

In private life, he is a man of proud bearing, affable, magnificent, and charitable. He charms the eye, and although by no means brave, gives the impression of complete mastery over himself and others. Bayard himself, a man perhaps as rash in psychology as in deeds of arms, will one

day let himself be captivated, remarking: "This is a man who does not upset himself over trifles."

Such is the prince about to marry the child of fifteen. Why, after all, was he called the Moor? Why did the crowd shout "*Moro, Moro*" at his passage, and why was he sometimes symbolized by a negro's head, sometimes by a mulberry—"*moro*" in Italian? That is one of the little problems that produce big books, that in their turn arouse but minute interest. Once the matter is unravelled, one perceives that it was not worth while troubling over. Our subject was the fourth son of Francesco Sforza, the famous *condottiere*. At his birth, amongst other names and by reason of his colouring, he was given the surname of *Mauro*. This name being less common than his others, the little boy came to be known in the family circle as *Il Moro*. This surname was officially altered later when, at the age of five and after a serious illness he had contracted, he was solemnly dedicated to the Virgin and called Maria, causing him ever afterwards to sign his name as *Lodovico Maria Sforza*. But the name of *Mauro* or *Moro* survived in his private life, and the liking of the little Prince for what was original made him retain it alongside his real civil title. Perhaps, also, he was not displeased that his name should call forth ideas of the luxury and learning of the East, that in those days was so respected by the Western world. His intimates lent themselves to his fancy with good grace. It was always a privilege to those approaching the great to call the latter by

their favourite names, like a password that brought familiarity and raised them to the level of their superiors. In any case, that surname, which was really a nickname, was adopted by the populace and spreading, became the only name by which he was known to the whole of Europe and to posterity.

He lent his name to all sorts of expressions, applications and symbols. It became the " Moor " from overseas, represented by a negro's head ; the " mulberry "—the prudent tree that only risks budding after all others, when the season is settled—and it even became a colour, the especial violet of the mulberry. If Time had retained but one of these synonyms it would have been retained to the exclusion of the others, and wise men would have criticized it with their usual assurance when they possess but one document. Unfortunately for them, but luckily for the artist, the symbol of Ludovic the Moor is a decorative chameleon.

It is the same with his coats-of-arms, emblems and armorial bearings. He had different ones for all and every one of the contradictory circumstances of his life. Most of them came to him from his ancestors—the Sforzas, or else the Viscontis—and when an event in his own history suited one of these, he gave it the preference. When one lifts one's eyes to the ceilings of the *Castello* of Milan (now rebuilt but scrupulously decorated with the Sforza motifs), or when one looks at the Missals in the Trivulce Collection, these symbols can be seen in profusion : pigeons flying in rings of

flame ; vipers in coils crushing a child ; imperial eagles with spread and flattened wings ; a lion capped with a helmet and crest ; lighted torches with buckets suspended from them ; a brush or *scopetta* in the shape of a fan ; a tipstaff ; a raised arm holding a hatchet to strike a tree ; a hound tied to a stake ; a knotted cloth with falling ends ; finally, some *ondes*. . . . What a host of varied meanings and significances ! What problems to be unravelled ! If little Beatrice had even tried to ferret out the secret thoughts of her future husband amongst all these emblems, doubtless she would have got lost, just as we lose ourselves in that labyrinth of decorations. However, she scarce gave it a thought, for it is the learned alone who evince curiosity in such matters. It seems that her sole anxiety on her wedding day was to look well in her white brocade dress, and not to let the tip of her nose get frozen.

The wedding took place during the winter of 1490–1. The River Po was frozen over, so they drove to it on sledges. The procession slipped along through the Lombardy plains like a wedding party in Holland. The blessing was received at Pavia, that old capital of the Lombard Kings, on January 17th, " a day very suitable for auguring the birth of a son," as the best astrologers of the time were careful to point out. The whole country-side covered with snow, springs and rivers icebound, a great white veil spread over earth and water, and on the very roofs of the " hundred-towered-town "—such was the welcome our little mask

found as she entered into the State of her lord and master, and into her new city.

What sort of figure would she cut, and what rôle would she play there? Such were doubtless the thoughts that were occurring to Ludovic the Moor, 430 years ago, as they occur to us to-day.

Chapter II

A WOMAN[1]

HER DEVELOPMENT is very rapid, and it is thus as a woman that we see her making her entry to the Rocchetta—a madcap, perhaps, but by no means indifferent to her surroundings. Her eyes, maybe somewhat dazzled by the splendour of the Sforzas, are yet very well able to see what is purposely not thrust into their vision, in the depths of the Corte Ducale. At the very start, they perceive a certain very beautiful and clever woman, exercising control over the Duke's affections—the famous Cecilia Gallerani, whose portrait was painted

[1] Works referring to Beatrice d'Este: C. Carlo Magenta: *Visconti and Sforza at the Castello of Pavia.* A. Luzio and E. Renier: *The Relations of Isabella d'Este Gonzague with Ludovic and Beatrice Sforza.* A. Luzio: *Isabella d'Este and the Sforza Court.* G. Uzelli: *Leonardo da Vinci and the Ladies of Milan.* G. d'Adda: *Lodovico Maria Sforza.* L. Beltrami: *The Castello of Milan under the Sway of the Sforzas.* Rosmini: *History of Milan.* Pelissier: *Louis XII and Ludovico Sforza,* and *The Lady-Friends of Ludovic Sforza.* B. Corie: *History of Milan.* Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Ady): *Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan.* Francesco Malaguzzi Valeri: *The Court of Ludovic the Moor;* I, *Private Life;* II, *Bramante and Leonardo da Vinci;* III, *The Lombard Artists.* Delaborde: *Charles VIII's Expedition into Italy.* Pasolini: *Catherine Sforza* Jean d'Auton: *Chronicles of Louis XII.* Philippe de Commynes: *Memoirs.* Malapiero: *Venetian Records.* Muratori: *The d'Este Family.* Octavien de Saint-Gelais: *The Vergier d'Honneur.* Barnadine Corio: *Milanese History.* Italian Historical Archives. Lombard Historical Archives.

by Leonardo—and then that this lady is about to present Ludovic the Moor with a child. Although this was not contrary to the customs of the day, it succeeds in revolting Beatrice, who refuses to share her husband with anyone, and likewise rejects the offer from her husband of a gold brocade dress, if the fair Gallerani dares appear in public wearing its double. Dragging her father's ambassador into the matter, she demands the dismissal of this favourite, who for ten years has been installed in an unassailable state of royalty. In a word, she desires to improve the state of morals at the Court, and it looks as though the Moor has brought a demon into his house ; but since this demon possesses the attraction of a new plaything, something must be sacrificed to her.

The Moor yielded, advising the Court of Ferrara that he was going to separate for ever from the fair Gallerani ; and in order that his " for ever " might at least have the appearance of lasting for some time, he desired that the separation should receive the blessing of the Church and the splendour of a marriage. Moreover, as the lady in question had just presented him with a son, it seemed incumbent upon him to provide her with a husband. For this appointment he chose the Count Lodovico Bergamini, one of the noblest-born gentlemen of his Court, whom he overwhelmed with favours and installed, together with his fair Countess, in the palace known as the Carmagnola or *dal Verde*, then the most beautiful in Milan, as it had recently been freshly decorated by the foremost artists of

the day—a worthy setting for the beauty expelled from the Rocchetta. There she lived happily, and survived all those who had driven her out. The crowd passing to-day along the Via Rovello, before the Ministry of Finance, once the Carmagnola Palace, gives little thought to the pagan goddess whose temple it was, and would be hard put to it to find there any traces of its splendours of yesterday. However, our little mask must have contemplated it more than once with satisfaction, as a monument to the first victory gained over her husband.

Nor is it the only victory she won, for her good man receives one surprise after another. To begin with, he discovers in her an accomplished horse-woman. Her education at Ferrara had been more in the way of sports than anything else. Equitation was held in high esteem at Ferrara, where races were frequently held. The Master of the Horse used to go as far as England to purchase horses in order to improve the breed, and keenness was stimulated by competition with the famous Mantua stud. Beatrice has long been devoted to horse-manship, and after her marriage, rides almost every day—not a mere parade in the riding school, by any means. In a wolf hunt, she does thirty miles without stopping, easily getting over the thousand and one obstacles in her way. On May 16th, 1491, the Moor writes to Isabella d'Este, regretting that she could not be with him at the wolf hunt to display her talents. "Although such is the courage of the illustrious Duchess, my wife and

your sister, that I do not know how you would manage to surpass her. . . ." These hunting parties are fraught with danger, but nothing seems to daunt her. Once a frightened stag dashed at her horse but she did not fall off, and when her husband and the others rushed up crazy with fear for her, they discovered her in fits of laughter, although the stag had wounded her in the shoulder. On another occasion, a wild boar attacked her greyhounds ; she dashed straight at the beast and struck it down with the skill of an old hunter. She even dabbles in falconry and makes a success of it. "*La mia consorte ucella tanto bene ch'ella me avanza*," exclaims Ludovic the Moor. Enlivened by her success, he is beginning to fall in love with her. "She is more precious to me than the sunlight," writes he to the Court of Ferrara. The devilish enthusiasm of this girl is warming up the severe and learned diplomat, causing him to forgive her all her acts of madness. We find him writing to Isabella d'Este, from Milan, on April 12th, 1491 :—

I could not explain to you a thousandth part of the things done by my wife and the Duchess of Milan, nor the ways they find of entertaining themselves ; such as galloping their horses at full speed and riding after their ladies to make them fall off their mounts. And now that they are at Milan they conceived the idea, when it was raining yesterday, of both going into the town on foot, accompanied by four or six of their ladies, wearing cloths over their heads in guise of headdress, to purchase provisions. As it is not the custom here to go about wearing cloths on the head, it seems that this fact attracted the attention of some women who made nasty remarks about them ; whereupon my wife flew into a temper and began to retort in the same tone, to such

good effect that they nearly came to blows. Afterwards they came back home all covered with mud and tired out—a sight to marvel at ! I think that when Your Excellency comes here, they will go with more courage, for they will have you, whom they know to be plucky, with them, and if anyone attempts to be rude to them, Your Excellency will protect them and teach them a lesson.

Your affectionate brother,
Lodovico.

In the company of his young wife, the great man was also acquiring a taste for burlesque entertainments. Those people who imagine him constantly engaged in the appreciation of Art with Leonardo or teasing the French Ambassadors in the Council for their excess of talkativeness, have a very incomplete conception of him. Those Renaissance characters are best known to us by the traits distinguishing them from their forebears, and by their new ideas on civilization, and it is correct to thus depict them, for the most important point to always note in a man or a period, is wherein he or it differs from others. But these traits are far from being the only ones he is remarkable for. There were others, relics of barbarism ; and just as the Faith of the Middle Ages was very little affected by what is known as " the paganism of the Renaissance," so the liking for vulgar farces and practical joking existed alongside the new learning and subtle refinement of mind.

Thus it was that Ludovic the Moor willingly put Plato and Chalcondylas on one side, to go off with the peasants of Vigevano and snare wolves, foxes, wild cats, and other smelly beasts of the

countryside, for which he paid them a ducat a head, and which he had transported stealthily into the house of Trotti, the Ambassador of Ferrara, a notorious coward and serious-minded man, who detested anything facetious. One can imagine the diplomat's anger at discovering all this fauna concealed in beds, climbing over wardrobes, hiding behind chests screeching and biting. His holiday at Vigevano became a nightmare to him, and cursing this craze for hunting picnics, he sighed for his comfortable quarters in Milan. There at least, he thought, he would be in safety. He was wrong ! During the night, the smelly animals, carried in sacks by cunning footmen, were thrown over the wall into his garden, and spread devastation amongst his poultry. The whole Court was in ecstasies over the success of the affair. The Ambassador barricaded himself, locked all the doors and saw that they were securely bolted ; but the practical jokers, under the pretence that they bore warrants from the police, or that there was a fire in his dwelling, adopted all sorts of stratagems to introduce all that remained of the furry devils from the Duke's menagerie.

Finally, Trotti retired to Pavia where he had a house bestowed on him by the munificence of the Duke, and there prepared to make merry. All the Court followed him. Now, it was the custom at that period to arrange the silver plate on a buffet, as can be seen in the picture *The Wedding at Cana*, in the Louvre behind the left-hand colonnade. The Courtiers took advantage of this fact to steal a

silver dish which was offered to Beatrice. The unfortunate victim rushed off to her to ask for the return of his property, but he was seized by the Duke, and thus held, had the mortification of seeing the little Duchess come up to him, plunge her hands into his purse and extract two ducats, which she made a present of to her niece, in the midst of roars of applause, declaring that he would never see his dish again without the payment of such ransom, and then leaving him, after carrying off his silk cap, which she had no intention of ever restoring to him! Everyone was delighted and, in order to show that they were not selfish, insisted that the wretched Ambassador should report the matter to his own government, so that the Court of Ferrara might share in the laughter that was splitting the princely sides in Milan.

In the midst of all this childishness, the Moor suddenly discovers that his wife is a hard worker. On the 12th of June, 1491, we find him writing to Isabella d'Este as follows :—

I have recently spent several days at the Chartreuse at Pavia, which, I know, Your Excellency visited at your last stay here. As I found that the choir stalls were in no way suitable, nor equal in beauty to the rest of the building, I returned there again yesterday, had them taken away, and gave orders that new stalls should be designed to replace them. On my way back, the Duke and Duchess and my wife came to meet me and attacked me suddenly. In order to defend myself, I divided up my people, most of whom were well mounted on mules, into three squadrons and charged the enemy in good order, so there was a splendid mêlée. Afterwards we returned home to see some young men tilting with the lance, and then to supper. The illustrious Duchesses had conceived the idea of returning to the Chartreuse, and there they

proceeded yesterday morning, and when the hour of their return was come, I went out to meet them, and found them all, both the Duchesses and their ladies, disguised as Turks. The costumes had been thought out by my wife, who had had them made in a single night ! It seems that about midday, when they began to work yesterday, the Duchess of Milan (Isabella of Aragon) could not conceal her surprise at seeing my wife sewing with as much zeal and energy as an old woman. My wife then told her that whatsoever she did, whether it was a game or something serious, she could not help putting her whole heart into it and trying to do her very best. Assuredly, in this case, she has well succeeded, for the grace and skill with which her idea was realized filled me with more pleasure than I can describe.

It is a perfectly natural and sometimes very amusing pastime for people born with a silver spoon in their mouths to ask themselves what they would do if they had to do something to earn their living, and more than one, in face of such an improbable and ridiculous suggestion, is unable to reply. Beatrice d'Este would have had no hesitation in replying ; she would have been a *modiste*. "She is an inventor of new clothes," said a contemporary of her ; for she could use a needle and possessed the three essentials of the *modiste*—an inventive mind, the gift of perpetual motion, and the genius for costly adornment. I say nothing about taste, for it would be difficult for the incessant variations of fashion to be all happy inspirations, and it can be seen that Beatrice's were not so. For example, being short and rather inclined to stoutness, she should always have worn dresses constructed on vertical lines, as she does in the case of her dark blue and yellow dress, to be seen in the Brera Collection ; but she also

wears horizontal bands on her dresses, placed at certain distances apart, as can be seen on her sculptured figure on the tomb in the Chartreuse at Pavia. She was therefore ready to risk an unfortunate choice of design rather than have to wear the same dress twice. I do not say this is to her credit as a coquette, but to her credit as a *modiste*—two very different things which should not be confused. For coquetry, or the art of making the most of one's beauty, would tempt the woman who found that best to always put on the same style of dress, and where would one get to then? It would mean the ruin of fashion, stagnation, the end of everything!

The Gods preserved Beatrice from so gloomy a tendency. Besides the genius for invention, they had endowed her with a daring that no extravagance could daunt, when it came to a question of new clothes. Therein, moreover, she was aided by circumstances, for at that period competition was not permitted to everyone at Milan. The legislator in his wisdom, reserved the right to wear outspoken and ridiculous toilettes to honest women alone. All excess of jewellery and embroidery, long trains, slashing, too open and immodest or too complicated fashions of dress were forbidden to courtesans. Of course that did not prevent them from wearing them, but if they did so, they appeared to follow the example of honest women, instead of setting it to the latter, as is usually the case. So that Beatrice, being the richest of reigning princesses—except, maybe, the Queen of France—and the

greatest spender, could dare do anything and did dare. At Vigevano in 1493—that is to say, only two years after her marriage—she possessed already four hundred and twenty-four dresses, without counting those she had left behind her in Milan.

Her wardrobe was so ostentatious that on one of her visits her mother thought she was looking at the treasure of a church filled with robes such as were made in those days. We know nothing of those four hundred and twenty-four dresses, nor of the hundreds that followed them, but we know sufficient, either from descriptions or from portraits, to render homage to that spendthrift genius and realize the full value of the title bestowed on her by her contemporaries and worthy of being engraved on her tombstone: "An inventor of new dresses."

It is not that the general theme of her dresses is very varied. It is always the *camora*, a full dress falling to the feet, with a low bodice laced in front and independent sleeves of different material and colour from the "body," moulded to the arms and attached to the shoulders by bows; or else the *vestito*, a dress for ceremonial occasions, usually made of brocade covered with embroidery and lace, low-necked also, with long sleeves *a la guarnazzone*, that left the arm at the elbow and drooped to the ground, or else were on the contrary short and sticking out like a penguin's wings; at other times she wore the *sbernia*, a floating sleeveless cloak, or cape with broad sleeves trimmed with costly fur. More

rarely, one sees the *opelanda*, a fashion of dress already out of date in Beatrice's time, a garment somewhat resembling in its style, the Empire dress ; high-waisted, with very low-necked bodice, the skirt falling straight, but differing from the Empire dress in the length of the sleeves and their wings, and the ample width of the skirt at the bottom. Those are the only very distinct and definite types of Court costume at that period. But what variations in those three or four well-known themes ! With the exception of Beatrice's head-dress, that always seems to remain the same, everything else on her changes with kaleidoscopic rapidity.

First of all, there are the dresses she wore at her churching. At the *Te Deum* following the birth of her son Ercole, and later Maximilien, Beatrice appeared at Sainte-Marie-des-Graces in a " wonderful dress of cloth of gold, enriched with bows of turquoise silk, and very gallantly covered with a *sbernia* of turquoise silk " ; and at a fête given by Gaspare di Pusterla to celebrate that happy event, she came with an aigrette of rubies in her hair and a crimson satin dress embroidered with knots and designs in gold, and with many ribbons, after her usual style. At the same time, she brought out a toilette she had had made for the carnival—a *vestito* composed of strips of cloth of gold placed crosswise on crimson velvet covered with a trellis of silver net, with long silver fringes on other bands of cloth of gold.

About the same period she wore, at her usual receptions at Milan, a *camora* of black satin, with

bands of gold brocade that fell from top to bottom "undulating like flames." Her neck and breast were adorned with jewellery and her head with a head-dress of fluffy black silk with an upstanding plume, "in such a way that she looked like a queen."

For her portrait with her husband, at the foot of the Virgin and various saints, she required another toilette, less sovereign but one that would do honour to the divine company. You will see it, when you go to Milan, if you visit the Brera Gallery and dare the loneliness and boredom of Room XVII. There you will find a big picture of the Saints entitled *La Pala Sforcesca*, formerly in the church of Saint-Ambrose *Ad Muros*. It is a harmony of blue, gold and dirty white, with splashes of raw red on the borders. It is attributed sometimes to Zenale, sometimes to Ambrogio de Predis, sometimes to Bernardino dei Conti, sometimes to Antonio da Monza; but to whomsoever it may be allotted, it is not what you might call praiseworthy. Indeed, it is rather a poor kind of picture, except for a wonderful reproduction of the fashions of the day. Providence in its goodness has willed that there should be bad paintings in order that we might have exact replicas of the past. There are indications that this one is exact. For example, there has been found a fragment of the very velvet from which the tunic of Ludovic the Moor is made—sky blue with satin trimmings, and embroidered with a motif of pineapples and carnations. Beatrice is shown kneeling, her left

profile illustrated, hands joined, wearing a silken dress of blue, black and gold over all, and on the sleeves ; a Harlequin dress, long and well-fitting, displaying her figure, cut fairly high, with a thin gorget of rose edged with pearls. The dress is slashed around the shoulder showing the white lining, and the slashing runs down the sleeves to the wrists, held together everywhere by bows and streamers of salmon ribbon.

Behind the head (dressed as our bust is), hangs right down to the ground the long black and white rope, the *cuazzone* of the Milanese, composed of hair rolled in a white material and bound with a black cord crossed in an X pattern. There are jewels as well. The head-dress is composed of big pearls close together in strings bearing, towards the temple, and superimposed on the hair, an ornament also made of two plaques superimposed one on the other with rubies and sapphires, and below, three enormous pearls arranged in a garland or *giande*, according to the custom of the time. The fillet is composed of small lozenges of jade. A collar also of jade likewise surrounds the throat, and a long necklace, composed of jade and pearls alternating like caterpillars in procession, falls from the neck below the bust and is terminated with a red pendant. That is what Beatrice d'Este puts on to receive you in the Brera Gallery.

If, on the other hand, you go to see her at Florence, in the Ulysses Room of the Pitti Palace, you will find her wearing a different toilette ; an olive green low-cut corsage, edged with a border

BEATRICE D'ESTE PRAYING.
Fragment of the picture called *La Pala Sforzesca*.
Brera Gallery, Milan.

To face p. 50.

of twisted gold, a broad band of gold lacework, figuring foliage and leafwork, and a broad red band, the whole outlining her throat, shoulders and arms, Above the sleeves, which are distinct from the body of the dress and attached to the bodice with 8-shaped knots of black silk, are epaulets slashed with white. Down the sleeves, bands of gold are worked between the slashings and five little golden chains are interwoven with the gold bands. It is a stream of precious ornaments.

The whole toilette is not shown, the bust alone being visible. It is still our bust of the Louvre, seen from the left profile, but thickened a little with age, and loaded by the Moor with jewellery. The fillet is plastered with squared emeralds. The back of the head is imprisoned in a head-dress composed of gold network in a regular and quasi-geometric design. At the side of the head is an ornament composed above of a square ruby set in the centre of a squared emerald bigger than the ruby, and below of an enormous pearl unmounted and hanging like a pear. Around the neck is a collar of big pearls, from which hangs a pendant composed of a small square emerald and a big round ruby mounted on a very heavy setting with very big claws, and a pear-shaped pearl, that half nestles under the corsage. Below this hangs a long gold chain, and finally there hangs from the neck a long coral necklace which is lost to sight behind the frame of the picture. It is one of the most minutely depicted toilettes in the Pitti Palace.

Great imagination is required to make certain of

such variety, and Beatrice neglected no detail and no co-operation. Her correspondence, that contains not a single word relating to the work of the artists who surrounded her, bristles with allusions to her dressmakers and embroiderers. She has herself sent patterns of hangings and dresses by her mother's embroiderer, one Master Jorba, a Spaniard famous in that Art, and discusses them at some length with her people. "This evening," she writes to her mother, "I received the pattern of the *camora* which Jorba made, that I think very beautiful, and which I have just shown to my embroiderer, as Your Excellency recommended me to do. He remarks that the flowers drawn by the master are all of the same dimension, and that, as the *camora* will naturally be narrower at the top than at the bottom, the flowers should be smaller in proportion. I have not yet decided what had better be done about it, but I thought I would tell you what Schavezi says and now await your advice, and shall do what you may consider best under the circumstances."

The deepest mourning does not decrease her fondness for self-adornment. She has just lost her mother in November 1493, but despite all the grief one may feel, one must wear something on one's back. Besides, she is about to marry off her niece, Bianca Maria Sforza—the one whose portrait, by Ambrogio de Predis, has just been placed in the Louvre with the Arconati Visconti Collection—to Maximilian, King of the Romans, the future Emperor of Germany, and will therefore

require a toilette as monumental as the event. Very aptly she remembers a design of interwoven chains, a *fantasia dei vinci* which the humanist Niccolo da Corregio once conceived for her sister, and burns to have that. But, on account of her mourning, is it forbidden her? She hastens to write on the subject to her sister, Isabella d'Este :—

I cannot remember whether Your Excellency carried out that design of interlaced chains which Messer Niccolo da Corregio suggested to you the last time we were together. If you have not yet ordered this to be executed, I propose to carry it out in massive gold on a purple velvet camora, to wear on the day Madame Bianca gets married, for it is my husband's desire that the whole Court should leave off mourning for that one day, and wear colours. That being the case, I cannot very well dispense with wearing colours on that occasion, although the great loss that we have experienced through the death of our dear mother has hardly left me any taste for new inventions in the way of dress. But since it is necessary, I have decided to try that design, if Your Excellency has not yet made use of it, and am sending this by my messenger, begging you not to keep him, but to let me know immediately whether or not you have tried this new design.

It appears that she received her answer in due course, for on December 29th, 1493, she writes from Vigevano to her sister, giving her an account of the ceremony :—

I wore a camora of violet velvet with cloak, and worked on it the design of interlaced chains in massive gold enamelled, with white background and the actual chainwork in green—the chains being about a foot from the ground. Likewise there were chains on the bodice, back and front, and the sleeves appeared to be fixed with these same chains. The camora was lined with cloth of gold, and over all, I wore the cordon of Saint Francis made of big pearls, and at the end, instead of the usual ornament, a big ruby balass without leaves.

It was not only in her own family circle that she sought for inspiration. Of what use were Ambassadors, if not to give her ideas for dresses? In 1492, when the Milanese Embassy goes to Paris to conclude an alliance with Charles VIII, Calco, the secretary of the mission, is charged by the Duchess to give her information relative to the costumes worn by the Queen of France: "A dress of gold brocade and a cloak of lion's skin, edged with crimson," then the hat—the famous head-dress of Anne of Brittany—"a bonnet of black velvet, with a hanging fringe about a finger in length, and a hood adorned with big diamonds, drawn over her head and ears." Beatrice meditates a long time over this message, but words are too vague. She requires a drawing, and on April 8th Ludovic writes to his envoy, to get from him a sketch, in order that the same toilette may be realized at Milan.

Such carefulness has its reward, for when two years later, Charles VIII and his Court arrive in Italy, they discover the Duchess of Bari wearing the same head-dress as their own queen. Beatrice had accompanied her husband to Annone, a castle about ten miles from Asti. She had prepared with passionate care her appearance before the French, as though it were the most difficult test in her life, an examination to be passed before the most critical eyes in the world and accustomed to the most coquettish of women. Whilst her sister Isabella is dying of jealousy in her old Castello at Mantua, she, the youngest, goes to meet the

King of France on a palfrey caparisoned with gold and crimson velvet. She wore a dress of "green cloth of gold with an embroidered linen bodice, and her head was dressed with a great number of pearls, her hair being twisted and tied with a silk ribbon hanging down behind"; then a hat of crimson silk, made exactly like the French ladies' and decorated with red and grey plumes.

Poets have sung her splendour. Ludovic the Moor was greatly praised by them for having put this touch to the display. We read in the *Vergier d'Honneur* :—

> With him he had brought his Consort,
> Who was the daughter of the Duke of Ferrara.
> From day to day she willingly clad herself
> Wholly or partly in cloth of gold.
> Chains, collars, trinkets, jewellery,
> It was commonly remarked that she had so much
> That it was dazzling.
> Better indeed, the sheaf than its binding.
> Around her neck she had rings, jewels and collars,
> And to crown her head rich stuffs,
> Gold trimmings, embroidery, and brocade.

It must be believed that this profusion pleased the "Barbarians," for "the King did gallantly take his hat in his hand and advancing towards Beatrice and her eighty ladies, did kiss them all in turn, beginning with the Duchess and the wife of the Lord Galeaz.[1] Then they all remained to amuse themselves in the Great Hall, made Madame the Duchess dance for them, and comported them-

[1] Bianca Sforza, a natural daughter of Ludovic the Moor, and wife of Galeazzo of San Severino. See the later chapter dedicated to her.

selves as though they had known each other for a year."

Such were the toilettes of the time; striking, heavy and variegated, partaking of the chasuble, cuirass and the Harlequin. What would most strike us to-day, in contrast to our own garments, is their extreme variety and the extreme liberties taken with the fashions. It might well happen that on certain solemn occasions, all the ladies of the Court would wear a sort of uniform, like a girls' school. Thus it was, on the occasion of Beatrice's marriage at Pavia in 1491, that all wore the Spanish costume, with a bodice cut round and the *sbernia* thrown over the right shoulder. Their hair, weighted with pearls, hung in tresses over their shoulders. On the occasion of the visit to Ferrara in May 1493, it seems that they had all the same costumes of gold brocade and the same rosaries of pearls. Finally, at the solemn ceremony of the ducal investiture of Ludovic the Moor, all the princesses and their ladies were in a red and green uniform, with enormous slashings around the shoulders, and the long tress rolled in a queue and bound with white. Seen from behind, they must have looked like an assembly of Chinese. However, such uniformity was rare; ordinarily, diversity was the order of the day—diversity of shape and antithesis of colour, not only between the different toilettes, but between the different parts of the same dress, the taste for Harlequinade and half-in-half colouring carried to extremes. The sleeves almost always independent of the body,

and of striking colours, the material of the chemise appearing through little openings called *stricce* or *sbuffi* ; gold braiding, webbing, blasons and devices sewn on the material ; gold work, catching the eye and reflecting the light with the effect of Persian majolicas or of chalices, and ribbons of another colour floating out and falling to the feet, gave rise to all sorts of individual fancies and eccentricities.

A further element of variety, at this period, was the application of embroidered motifs—mottoes, emblems, blasons, sometimes notes of music—on dresses. A singular and magnificent example of this style can be seen in a painting in the Picture Gallery in Brussels, which was taken from a church in Bruges ; the subject being some Holy Martyrs, grouped in a delightful garden around the Virgin and Child, and wearing ceremonial dress. It is a work in the style of Memling and Gerard David, and dating from the end of the fifteenth century. The artist has conceived the idea that each Saint, once admitted to Paradise, has donned a splendid and sumptuous toilette, on which many times repeated, is figured by way of ornamental motif, the instrument of his or her martyrdom—wheels for Saint Catherine, towers for Saint Barbara—made of pearls embroidered on gold tissue or laid on in panels. An ingenious and touching idea, the instrument of torture on earth becoming the decoration of triumph in Heaven—that is to say, the transmutation into spiritual delights of the pains endured down here.

Of course, the motifs which adorned the dresses of the fair Milanese at the same time, were not of such deep or austere symbolism, but all the same they were intentional and premeditated. The towers of the port of Genoa, the compasses, Mercury's staff, chains, and notes of music, all meant something. There was a little of everything—politics, peace or war, alliances, conquests—in the folds of those blazoned dresses; even butterflies seen flitting round a torch, embroidered on skirts or bodice, sparkling in the light, warned gallants that they would get burned if they allowed their desire to bring them too close.

The fashions of the time must not be judged from the portraits left us by great artists, for the latter are great poets when it comes to a matter of adjustment. First of all, they arrange the dresses to suit themselves, cut and sew in their own way, infinitely better than dressmakers. This can be seen very clearly if we compare the few costumes still extant from the eighteenth century, stiff and massive, with what La Tour or Perroneau, or even Moreau the younger, have made of them in their pictures. Furthermore, it is rare that they allow their models the exaggerations or affectations of fashion. Leonardo da Vinci's precept — "the fashions of the times should be avoided as far as possible"—has been instinctively adopted by almost every master.

Every time, indeed, that we find alongside their masterpieces subsidiary documents dealing with the toilettes they have depicted, we notice that

on entering their studio, the fair model has put off a good many of her foibles, just as the tongue, when its owner goes to call on the great writer, drops its affectations and slang. As a matter of fact, the coquette of the Renaissance was a much more complicated and bizarre person than the Titiens, Raphaels and da Vincis have depicted. Streaming with ribbons, covered with gold cords, punctuated with pearls, with groups of slashings on her shoulders, balloons of linen at her elbows, rows of embroidery on her skirts, perched on her high shoes, and covered with patterns in gold like a Missal, or with notes of music like a Psalter, she seemed a living sign of learning, richness and art ; but if with all that she possessed any grace, it was far less due to her costume than to herself.

What most struck strangers, and especially the French, about Beatrice d'Este, was her jewels. Many queens would have been ruined, had they attempted to equal the Queen of France at this period, but Beatrice felt no anxieties on this score and did her very best to rival her. According to Malaguzzi Valeri, whose sources of information are quite reliable, Ludovic possessed precious stones in great numbers. There was a piece of jewellery, composed of a big diamond with three pearls suspended from it, called the "Wolf," valued at 12,000 ducats ; then there was a balass (rubies of inferior value to Eastern rubies, and of a violet colour very much in fashion in the Middle Ages), called "*El Spico*," valued at 25,000 ducats ; others ranging in value from two, four, to 7,000 ducats

apiece, each with its own name: *el buratto* (the bolter); *la Sempreviva della Moraglia* (a big ruby with the mark of the tipstaff, a device dear to Ludovic); a *balasso*, certainly so named on account of its shape. *Il Marone* was worth 10,000 ducats—that is to say, about 86,000 francs, and six or seven times more than that in actual money value; another balass, bearing the effigy of the Duke, was worth 1,000 ducats; a gold ring of the same value, diamonds to wear on the forehead, golden gorgets enamelled in the French style, many clusters of pearls of 180, 160, 70, 40 pearls each, and of all sizes; a single pearl was worth quite 10,000 ducats. The doctor, Lodovico Carri, dazzled with so much wealth, wrote from Vigevano on October 16th, 1492, to the Duke of Ferrara: "The Lord Ludovic has shewed me so many and such beautiful jewels that I could not believe that Cyrus or Darius possessed so many or of such quality. This morning, in our presence, he presented one to the Duchess of Bari, worth 10,500 ducats."

A curious trait of hers was to wear all this jewellery in the country, in the open air and in full sunlight. On May 1st, 1492, Trotti, the Ambassador of Ferrara, writes from Vigevano:—

> To-day, which is the first of May, those illustrious Lords (the Duke of Milan and the Duke of Bari) with the illustrious Duchesses, their wives, and all the Court, men and women, went out into the country about three miles away from here, with their falcons to make them fly. We followed after them in great pomp, a very numerous company. The Duchesses (Beatrice d'Este and Isabella of Aragon) wore head-dresses in the French style, that is to say, with a horn on the forehead and long silken

veils ; their horns were decorated with very beautiful pearls intermingled with many jewels, diamonds, rubies, emeralds and other very precious stones, giving a very sumptuous and rich appearance ; but the pearls of the Duchess of Bari (Beatrice d'Este) were much bigger and finer than those of the Duchess of Milan (Isabella of Aragon). They were both wearing *tabis* (moire silk) of a green colour of which were fashioned their bodices, camoras and sleeves ; even the illustrious Madame Bianca, the natural daughter of the Lord Ludovic, wore the same without any difference. Their white and very handsome palfreys were decked out in green satin, both for their harness and their trappings. The greater part of their ladies were coiffed with horns in the French style, with long silken veils drooping to the ground, but without jewellery. All were likewise clad in green, either of damask, satin or zendali. They numbered about forty, and after bouquets had been picked with great joy and pomp, returned home for dinner.

Here we see an occasion, now lost to women, of displaying their toilettes. Amongst the pleasures which the human race, passing on its way, has discarded, there is none more lively, more obsessing nor more utterly vanished, than falconry, with all its appanage—snaring, flying, dog training, special language or affected slang, from which so many words have been merged into our everyday talk. For centuries it was the typical sport of the higher social classes, the attraction and unrivalled passion, the outward and visible sign of gentle birth, the only science where the King allowed himself the honour of being beaten, the only subject that could be discussed indefinitely without pedantry or satiety. It was also a pleasure of the Gods, and was depicted around the Cradle, on the skies of the Visitations or Nativities. When looking at a picture of the Adoration of the Magi, it is not rare to remark,

in that patch of pure blue sky that should be reserved for the flight of angels alone, a falcon gripping a kite or attacking a heron, at the risk of being thrust through by its long pointed beak. As a worthy canon of the fifteenth century writes :—

> He who had Death already in his teeth
> Would revive, had he such a pastime !

We cannot say whether we should take the same amount of pleasure in it, but doubtless, by its loss we have been deprived of a highly æsthetic form of amusement. Imagine the passing of the cavaliers, two by two, their falcons on their wrists, perched on the glove of white crispin ; the ladies in full dress covered with pearls ; the packs of hounds—greyhounds and spaniels—the pages and dogboys, clad in bright colours, half-in-half, like figures on playing cards ; then the dressing into line, the beat along the flowering heath or the river bank, the tinkling of the bells in a semitone, barking, whistling, and blasts on the horn ; then the sudden appearance of the game, the flight of the falcon into the depths of the sky, its drop on to its prey, the smart sideslip of the hunted bird to avoid the living meteor, the reclimbing of the hunter, the duel in the air between the noble bird and the carrion-eater, the feathers scattered on the noses of the gossips below, the feints and twists ; finally, the pursuit to the ground, the gallop to the landing-place, the mêlée of dogs and birds on the victim, the wrist extended for the gerfalcon's landing at will, or the lures swung in the falconers' hands

like leaves, until the falcon, harassed, bleeding and deprived of many of its feathers, exhausted and with its little heart beating fast, returns to its master. Compare all these gestures *in extenso*, which one by one bring into play all the springs of the human machine, with the brief, curtailed movement of the sportsman who shoulders his gun, or who, resting it on a bank, awaits the passing of the game driven by beaters in smocks, and you will see all that the gun has abolished of variety, colour and movement from sport.

Even the hunting of to-day cannot be compared to the venery of the Renaissance. The uniform dress that is worn, the fewness of the followers, the banality of the weapons and helpers employed to drive or catch the quarry, could in no way evoke the brilliant pageant of those lords one sees in the Riccardi or the Schifanoia, costumed according to their rank and country, armed with all sorts of curiously carved weapons, whose stocks alone were marvels of art, with their pikemen, their bowmen or cross-bowmen, their huntsmen, and their mounted attendants having before them, on small platforms, spotted leopards or cheetah—and then this spectacle : the cheetah released, springing to earth and, after two or three bounds, seizing the hare or hart, whilst the attendants rush up bearing a bowl full of blood, to make him let go—quite a barbarous but refined luxury, that has no longer its æsthetic equivalent with us.

Now, this was the sight on which Beatrice feasted her eyes daily, for the Court of Milan was famous

for its falconry and hunting. There it was that leopards were first introduced into hunting; and there also were the best bells, casts, lures and other accessories of hawking made. It was a source of no little vanity to the Sforzas, for these great patrons of art were, above all, great hunters. Turning over their correspondence, one notices something on which the historians of art are carefully reticent—that they were infinitely more attracted to venery than to painting.

Their hunting-grounds were immense and perhaps the best in Europe, in so far as it was a question of preserving and caring for the game. When travelling in Lombardy, in that vast plain watered by the Ticino, its tributaries and a multitude of canals, if one traverses that triangle formed by Milan on the east, Novara on the west and Pavia on the south, one is bound to notice from time to time massive constructions built in the style of strongholds or fortified houses, dating from the fifteenth century, and now converted into farmsteads, schools or prisons. Those are the old hunt meeting-places of Ludovic the Moor: Pavia, Vigevano, Abbiategrasso, Bereguardo, Cusago, Binasco, Galliate, and many others smaller. These châteaux, half palace, half fortress, sometimes model farms like the Sforcesca, haunted by the formidable shadow of Leonardo da Vinci, raised their towers at that time in the midst of parks abundantly stocked with roebuck, wild goats, hares and partridges, which were brought, as the need arose, from Domodossola, Lake Maggiore and from the Valtelina.

In the rolling and wooded park at Pavia alone, through which ran two rivers, the roaming, galloping herd of stags, hinds and roebuck was estimated at five thousand head. There was no lack of wild boar, rabbits swarmed, pheasants abounded in the thickets, quails called in the fields ; herons, ducks, and other water fowls clamoured along the river banks ; swans glided along the smooth waters. A thousand varieties of delightful scents and smells, floating in the air, tickled the twitching nostrils of the dogs. It was a hunter's paradise—a paradise lost to-day, hunting being one of the few professions or pastimes which progress has in no way enriched, but rather impoverished, the variety of species of game diminishing from day to day in Western Europe. It is thus natural that the Sforzas should be passionately devoted to a sport which they had every facility for enjoying.

Their womenfolk had a further reason for flinging themselves into this kind of sport headlong, and this was that they found therein an admirable occasion for displaying their toilettes. At that period, when artificial lights were few and weak, and lit no answering fire in jewels, it was necessary, if one wanted to show off one's jewellery, to wear it in the sunlight. Thus, as soon as hunting was mentioned, everyone began to make a move towards the Treasure Tower. From those beautiful cupboards, designed by Leonardo da Vinci, there were extracted heavy pendants, collars, necklaces, earrings, tiaras ; and as the palfreys cantered along, all this jewellery twinkled at throats and floated out

in the breeze, under swaying boughs, through the thickets, amidst the din of feet, scattering of pebbles, splashing of mud, shouts from the men, baying of hounds, and snarling of cheetahs.

In the month of March 1491, Beatrice d'Este writes to her sister, Isabella :—

I am at Villanova, where the beauty of the countryside and the sweetness of the air are making us believe ourselves already in the month of May, such warm and splendid weather are we enjoying. Every day my husband and I go out on horseback with the falcons and dogs, and never come back without having enjoyed excellent sport with the herons and river fowl. The game is so abundant here, that hares seem to spring from every corner, so that often we really do not know on which side to turn to select the best quarry. Indeed, the eye cannot grasp all we desire it to, and it is almost impossible to tell the number of animals in the neighbourhood. I must not forget to tell you either how every day, Messer Galeazzo and I, with one or two of the Court, amuse ourselves by playing at ball after dinner, and we often speak of Your Excellency and wish you were here. I tell you all this, not to diminish the pleasure I hope you will have when you come here, by pointing out to you what you may expect to find, but in order that you may understand how happy I am, and what a good and affectionate husband I have, for I can never really enjoy any pleasure unless it be shared with you. And I must tell you that I have had a whole field of garlic planted for you, so that when you come here, you may have your favourite dish in abundance.

March 18th, 1491.

Yielding to the seductive perspective of such supreme refinement, Isabella came on a visit the following year, and we find her writing in her turn, from Galliata, on August 27th, 1492 :—

To-day we went hunting in a beautiful valley, so lovely that one might have been pardoned for thinking it had been created

on purpose for the spectacle. All the stags were driven into the wooded valley of the Ticino, and hedged in on both sides by the hunters in such a way that they were forced to swim the river and climb the mountains on the other side, where the ladies were awaiting them, seated beneath a pergola and some green tents erected on the hillside. We could see all the movements of the animals, both along the valley and on the mountain slopes where the hounds were driving them towards the water. However, two only climbed the hill and disappeared over the horizon, so that we did not see them killed, but Don Alphonso and Messer Galeazzo followed after them and succeeded in wounding them. Then came a hind with her fawn, but the hounds were not allowed to hunt her. Many wild boars and roebuck were started, but only one boar was killed before our eyes and one buck, which fell to my share. The last to come was a wolf, that made magnificent leaps into the air. He passed in front of us and greatly amused the company, but none of his ruses could save the poor beast who shared the fate of his companions. And thus, after much laughter and a great deal of amusement, we returned home to finish the day with supper, in order to permit the body to share the recreations of the mind.

The chase is also an excellent occasion for farces and mystifications. Those fifteenth-century lords were not all equally deep or exacting in their appetites. It might require a great deal to move them to vengeance, but little to incite them to joking. A few months after the expedition related above, Ludovic the Moor writes to Isabella d'Este, who had returned to her home in Mantua :—

Dear and Very Illustrious and Excellent Lady, you know what pleasant times we have hunting the wild boar, for you came with us last summer. Poor Mariolo (the Jester of the Court of Milan), whom doubtless you remember, could not take part in these excursions, at first because he was ill at Milan, and later because he was obliged to keep my wife company during her illness. He was very disappointed at being absent from these expeditions, all the more since he learned that the King's Ambas-

sadors themselves had wounded a boar. He told us what wonderful things he would have done had he been there. Now that my very dear wife is getting better and beginning to go out, I thought that we might be able to amuse ourselves a little at his expense. A few wolves and some roebuck having been driven into a wood near the Pecorara, which is, as you know, not far from the Sforcesca, Cardinal Sanseverino had a tame pig shut up in the same enclosure and the following morning we started out to the meet, taking Mariolo with us. Whilst we hunted the wolves and the roebuck, we left him the tame pig, which he mistook for a wild boar and chased alongside the wood, making much fuss and noise. If only Your Excellency had been able to see him running after that pig, you would have died of laughter, all the more so as he bravely tried to stick it three times and only once succeeded in touching it in the right flank. Noting how proud he was of his prowess, we said to him, "Do you not know, Mariolo, that you gave chase to a tame pig?" He stood dumb with astonishment and quite bewildered, as though he did not understand what we meant, and so we returned home, infinitely diverted, and each enquiring of Mariolo if he did not know the difference between a wild and a tame pig.

Your brother,
LODOVICO MARIA SFORZA.

VIGEVANO,
December 6th, 1492.

In such a way did this most refined prince of the Renaissance divert himself.

After that, one might be tempted to think Beatrice d'Este devoted to dress designing or to playing coarse jokes on her jester. Such is by no means the case. All of a sudden we see her, despite her penchant for dressmaking and sport, transformed by circumstances into diplomat. Before she has attained the age of eighteen, she tries to convert the Doge and the Seigneurie to the views of Ludovic the Moor, or at least to learn theirs. Not officially, of course, for Ludovic the

Moor knew what our modern feminists do not appear to realize—that woman's greatest strength lies in acting by surprise, in concealing a wish in a smile, and in catching a man unawares. By warning people that they have to do with a woman who is a professional in diplomacy or law, in a science or a craft, others render that woman the worst possible service. They dispel that charm of the unexpected, and put her opponents on their guard; the accomplishment loses a great deal through lack of consideration of the worker; it becomes nothing more than a human accomplishment—that is to say, something of little importance. Ludovic the Moor took good care not to advertise the fact that he was sending an Ambassadress to Venice, for that would have stirred up the King of France and the Emperor, with whom he on his part was treating, and also put the Senators on their guard. He merely said that he was sending a woman, his wife, of whose beauty and accomplishments he was proud. She started off with her mother and sister-in-law—quite a family party—like any tourist desiring to see Saint Mark, descending the River Po by boat, accompanied by her secretaries, her Maids of Honour, her pages, her chaplain, and her singer. They played *scartino*, entertained each other, and listened to songs, while the hills and plains slid lazily past; but there were instructions camouflaged and buried in those long rows of chests on the boats that entered the Lagoon, under the *camoras* of crimson silk, under the *vestiti* of gold brocade,

the pearl-sprinkled hats, the jewelled aigrettes ; and day by day couriers left Milan to overtake her, make their reports and modify her plans.

She appeared at last before the delegates of the Seigneurie in the *Sala del Collegio*. She spoke, and whilst all eyes were fixed on the famous jewels, on the *Spigo* or the *Marone*, insinuating words fell from the lips of the fair Ambassadress. Such things as these were vaguely heard : the King of France might well descend on Italy, and thrust as far as Naples ; the Emperor Maximilian might no longer be able to refuse Ludovic the Moor the title of Duke of Milan, as the latter was *persona grata* with both, and was practically governing Lombardy in his nephew's name. . . . The slender bow of her lips loosed some very penetrating shafts, and the senators had never before found themselves in such a situation. They understood that day why the Court of Milan attracted strangers so much :

> It is not to be wondered at, said these worthy elders. . .

But, as a matter of fact, they were not so very astonished. They admired the little Ambassadress, applauded her, overwhelmed her with honours, but . . . they did not do all that she wished them to do. Helen herself could not have altered a vote in that august assembly. At least they were agreed as to her charm, and it is not certain that she did not prefer that. Certain it is that she never failed to mention, at the end of each dispatch, the dress she wore, and that she returned delighted

with her elderly hearers. A few of the letters she wrote each day to her husband concerning incidents of the journey, have been preserved. From these it can be seen that her entry to Venice was that of a Sovereign :—

Most Illustrious Prince and Excellent Lord, my very dear Husband [says she to him],

I wrote you yesterday on our arrival at Chioggia. This morning I heard Mass in the Chapel of the house where I lodge. The singers were there and I experienced the greatest spiritual delight in listening to them, Messer Cordier taking his part, as usual admirably, as he did also yesterday morning. Certainly, his singing is the greatest possible comfort to me. Afterwards we breakfasted and at ten o'clock we embarked in the *Bucentaure*, dividing ourselves between the big and the little *Bucentaure* and some gondolas, which had been prepared for our greater safety, the weather being still rather stormy. My very illustrious mother, Alfonso and Madame Anna, with some servants, went in the little *Bucentaure*, and the other ladies and gentlemen travelled on the bigger one or in the gondolas, with the Lord Girolamo, Messer Visconti and a few others, in order to lighten the little *Bucentaure* and travel in greater comfort, as we were assured would be the case.

Thus we started off and reached the port of Chioggia, where the boats began to dance about. I took the greatest pleasure in being swung up and down and, thanks be to God, I felt not the slightest ill effect. But I must tell you that there were some amongst us who were very frightened, amongst others, the Lord Ursino, Niccolo de Negri and Madonna Elisabetta. Even the Lord Girolamo, although he had been quite sober, felt rather uncomfortable, but no one in my gondola was actually ill, except Madonna Elisabetta and the Lord Ursino, in the port of Chioggia. Most of the others, and especially the women, were very sick indeed. Then the weather improved, so much so that we arrived at Malamocco to time. There we found about eighty gentlemen with three galleys admirably decorated and handled, into one of which we embarked with as many people of our suite as it could carry and were honourably placed in the prow. Several Venetian

gentlemen then boarded our galley with a certain Messer Francesco Capello, wearing a long mantle of white brocade, embroidered with big golden patterns such as you wear, who made a speech, informing us that the illustrious Seigneurie, having learned of your presence at Ferrara, had sent you two Ambassadors to express their friendship towards you and that then hearing of the visit of my mother and myself to Venice, had dispatched the other gentlemen who had met us at Chioggia ; and now as a further testimony of their affection, had sent the present company to Malamocco, to express the great pleasure that the Seigneurie felt at our coming and to inform us that the Doge himself, with the Seigneurie and a certain number of noble ladies were going to welcome us and do us the greatest possible honour. My mother, with her usual modesty, begged me to reply, but I insisted that she should say a few words, after which I should start to speak myself. But hardly had she finished speaking, and before I had time to begin, than all the gentlemen rushed forward to kiss our hands, just as they had done the day before, so that I was only able to express my feelings by amiable gestures. . . .

Then we started out for Venice, and before we had reached San Clemente, where the Prince awaited us, two rafts came to meet us, and saluted us with fanfares of trumpets and salvos of cannon. They were followed by two galleys armed for war, and other boats decorated like gardens, which was really beautiful to see. A vast number of boats, full of ladies and gentlemen, now surrounded us and accompanied us for the whole distance to San Clemente. . . .

Thus we entered the Grand Canal, where the Prince, who chatted with us all the way with extreme kindness and familiarity, took great pleasure in pointing out to us the principal palaces of that noble city and in telling us all about the ladies who appeared, all decked out in jewels, at every balcony and window, besides the great following (about a hundred and thirty ladies), who were with us on the *Bucentaure*. All the palaces were richly decorated, and certainly it was a splendid sight. The Prince shewed us all the principal objects along the Canal, until we had reached the palace belonging to my father, where we were lodged, and the Prince insisted upon landing and accompanying us to our apartments, although my mother and I begged him not to take so much trouble over us. We found the whole palace covered

with tapestry and the beds covered with satin draperies, bearing the Ducal arms and those of Your Excellency. The apartments were decorated with the Sforza colours. Thus you see that so far as the reception, the excellent company and our way of living are concerned, we could desire nothing better. To-morrow, you will have further news from me, if the audience takes place. I present my duties to Your Excellency.

VENICE,
May 27th, 1493.

As no form of amusement or speech-making was spared her, she, in her turn, spared no description to her husband :—

After dinner and a short rest, a great company of gentlemen came to take us to the *Festa* at the Palace. . . . During the ball, I began to get a headache on account of the excessive heat, and as my throat was also hurting me, I left the hall and retired to rest for an hour in another apartment. When I returned, it was already dark. A hundred lighted candles hung from the roof, and a pageant was being presented in the hall, in which two big animals with great horns appeared, ridden by two figures bearing golden bowls and cups decorated with greenery. These were followed by a triumphal car, whereon was Justice enthroned, a naked sword in her hand bearing the device *Concordia*, and all garlanded with palm and olive branches. In the same car was an ox, with feet planted on the figure of Saint Mark, and a viper ; the latter, as Your Excellency will readily understand, to symbolize the League. Just as, in all their speeches, the Prince and his gentlemen speak of Your Excellency as the cause of the present peace and quietness in Italy, so in the same way, they placed your head on a triumphal arch above the others in this pageant. . .

Afterwards there followed the banquet with its different dishes and sweetmeats brought in to the sound of trumpets and accompanied by an infinite number of candles. Before all the rest came the effigies of the Pope, the Doge and the Duke of Milan with their armorial bearings and those of Your Excellency ; then came Saint Mark, the Viper, the Diamond and many other objects fashioned in coloured and gilded sugar, about three hundred

in all, at the same time as a great variety of cakes and pastries and gold and silver goblets, which, spread the whole length of the hall, gave a splendid effect. Amongst other things, I remarked a figure of the Pope surrounded by ten Cardinals, which I was told was a prefiguration of the ten Cardinals whom the Pope was shortly to appoint. Dinner was served on the dais, and the dishes passed round with many of these "triumphal scenes"; the Pope and the Duke and the Duchess of Milan falling to my share.

Throughout the whole of that letter, one can feel the endeavour of the Ambassadress to render account of the slightest details that might prove diplomatic signals to the practised eye of the Moor. At the end, the frolicsome side of her character reappears :—

After that, we embarked in our boats and the clock had struck one in the morning before we were returned to our rooms. The Bishop of Como was sitting near me the whole evening, and his profound boredom at the length of the spectacle and his dislike of the heat that existed in that close room, caused me to laugh as I had never before laughed in my life. In order to tease him and amuse myself the more, I conceived the inspiration of telling him that there would be a great deal more of it and that the Fête would last until the next morning, and it was very diverting to see him stretch himself, first on one leg and then on the other, and to hear him groan out, "My legs are worn out! When will this Fête finish? I will never let myself be dragged to anything like this again!" I really think that his sighs and moans gave me as much pleasure as the Fête itself. When finally I had reached home and supped soberly and got to my bed, it was already three o'clock. The dress I wore after dinner was of crimson and gold moire silk with my cap edged with jewels and the pearl collar that bears the *Marone* as pendant. I commend myself to Your Excellency.

From Your Excellency's very affectionate wife,

BEATRICE SFORZIA VISCONTIS.

Finally, there is revealed in her character a little of the soul of the tourist, that likes to drift round and take pleasure in all it sees.

VERY EXCELLENT AND ILLUSTRIOUS LORD, MY VERY DEAR HUSBAND [she writes again to Ludovic the Moor],

To continue my recital of what is happening to us here day by day, I must inform you that this morning my illustrious mother, Don Alphonso, Madonna Anna and I, with all our suite started for Saint Mark, whither the Prince had invited us and our singers, to attend Mass and visit the Treasure; but before reaching Saint Mark, we landed at the Rialto and went on foot through those streets that are called the *Merceria*, where we saw the shops of spices, silk and other merchandise, all in good order, and remarkable at once for the quality, quantity and variety of the goods on sale. There was also a considerable display of other trades, so much so that we were stopping at every step to admire first one thing and then another, and were finally quite disappointed when we reached Saint Mark. There, the trumpets sounded from a *loggia* that is before the Church, and we found the Prince who came to meet us as far as the doors of Saint Mark and placing himself as before between my illustrious mother and myself, led us to the High Altar, where we found the priest already invested with his sacerdotal robes. There we knelt down with the Prince and recited the *Credo* and then took the seats prepared for us and heard the Mass that the priest and his assistants sang with great solemnity. Our singers bore their part, and their singing charmed in the highest degree both the Prince and all those who were present, especially the chant rendered by Cordier, who always goes to great trouble to do honour to Your Excellency.

After Mass, we accompanied the Prince to view the Treasure, but we had the greatest difficulty in the world to move forward, on account of the crowd of people that was there, as well as in all the streets, although each person tried to give us room, the Prince going so far as to shout out begging that the road might be cleared. However, finally the Prince himself was obliged to withdraw on account of the great press of the multitude and let us go in by ourselves with only a small number of persons, and even then we had the greatest trouble to advance. Once in safety

in the interior of the Treasure Tower, we looked at each thing, that gave us great pleasure, for there were there an infinite quantity of very fine jewels and some magnificent cups and chalices. When we left the Treasure Tower, we came to the Square of Saint Mark amongst the booths of the Ascension Fair that still continues and found a display of Venetian glass, so splendid that we were absolutely in transports over it and obliged to stay there some time looking at it. As we made our way along from booth to booth, everyone turned round to stare at the jewels which I was wearing on my velvet head-dress and on my bodice, which had the towers of the port of Genoa embroidered on it, and especially at the great diamond that I was wearing on my breast. I heard the folk remarking one to the other, "That is the wife of the Lord Ludovic. Look what wonderful jewels she has! What rubies and what splendid diamonds!" Finally, as the hour was already advanced, we returned home for dinner and it must have been then about two o'clock.

VENICE,
May 30th, 1493.

In this last trait there can be seen traces of diplomacy, not directed towards Venice, but towards her husband; a very commonplace sort of ruse, moreover, naturally inspired by circumstances. However much accustomed to luxuries of dress and especially to precious stones the ladies of the Lagoon might be, Beatrice's certainly made a great impression on them, especially their variety. On the day of her arrival, the Doge sees her embarking on the *Bucentaure* in a gold brocade dress worked with crimson pigeons, a jewelled aigrette in her hair, and that famous ruby, the *Spigo*, as pendant. On the following day he admires on her a crimson *camora* of moire silk, embroidered with a design still representing the beaconed harbour of Genoa, with two towers

embroidered on each of the sleeves, two others on the breast and two on the back, to each of which towers was suspended a big *balass* ruby ! On her head she wore a head-dress of very big pearls—like the biggest belonging to Isabella d'Este—and five other very fine *balass* rubies. The Venetians are dazzled. However splendid this apparition, those ladies and the Queen Cornaro, who was at Venice at that time, must not be allowed to imagine Beatrice to be a woman with only one dress to her back. Therefore, at the great *Festa* in the Ducal Palace, she arrives in quite a different toilette. The detail of her attire should be read in that excellent book by Julia Cartwright (Mrs. Ady), *Beatrice d'Este, Duchess of Milan.* Every time, it is either the collar changed or else the solitaire. Finally, she draws from her chests a *camora* embroidered with the emblem of the "tipstaff" which is figured in big pearls, rubies and diamonds, with a big diamond at the top. At this final blow, the Venetians lay down their arms, and Ludovic the Moor's secretary writes to her husband that "he may well consider himself the happiest Prince in the world" through having a wife so skilled in quick changes.

Let not this overflow of passion for the sumptuous, nor her fits of childish pranks, mislead us as to her real character. One must not take Beatrice for a mere doll disguised as a diplomat or as a marionette in the hands of the Moor. There is a veritable stateswoman in her. When by hazard, the impresario allows the threads to drop, when he himself

is in doubt as to what rôle to adopt, she acts alone, acts in his place, and acts well.

This was clearly seen, two years later, at the time of Charles VIII's expedition into Italy. This expedition had at first been encouraged by the Moor, as a means of intimidating the dynasty that ruled over the southern part of the Peninsula, but bit by bit, its object had changed. Charles VIII no longer thought of only wresting the Kingdom of Naples from the Aragon family, but he had now with him his cousin, the Duke of Orleans, the future King Louis XII, who considered he had a claim to Lombardy and was far more interested in that intermediate state than in the object of the journey. The French expedition into Italy was thus a two-edged sword, one edge turned towards Milan, the other towards Naples. So that it might only strike one way, it was necessary to get a grip on the hilt. Ludovic the Moor thought himself capable of this, and considered the King was not, and that the invasion, once loosed across the Peninsula, would strike with its own weight just where it was least expected. Thus it was that, after Fornua, and while Charles VIII was returning in the direction of France, the Duke of Orleans managed to break out of Asti, where he had been hemmed in, and in spite of the Sforza troops, advance on Novara and threaten Milan.

The Moor, who was far from expecting this attack, lost his head, withdrew from Vigevano, where he then was, towards Abbiategrasso, then

to the Castello in Milan, and started to utter desperate cries for help. "He is in bad health, with one hand paralysed, and hated by the people, from whom he fears a rising," relate certain Lombard Brothers, on their arrival in Venice. It is at this moment that Beatrice intervenes. She it is that takes the necessary measures for the defence of the Castello in case of attack, calls together the notables of Milan and says to them the right words to keep united that bundle of forces and wills about to be scattered. She convinces everyone of her fitness to wield power by the violence of her desire to keep it. She is rather like Theodora saving Justician. In any case, her effort was sufficient to keep things going for a few days, and shortly afterwards help arrived from Venice and the Moor was saved for this time at least.

In all this, where does the mother come in, the daughter or the wife? The mother is commonplace, and manifests herself in the letters she writes about her two sons, Ercole—later called Massimiliano in honour of the Emperor—and Francesco. There can be found the usual pride inspired by beautiful children and the solicitude that might be shown by the humblest mother in Lombardy, mingled with the customary superstitions of the time. For example, she writes from Villanova to her mother on April 16th, 1494 :—

Most Illustrious Lady and Very Dear Mother,

Your Excellency must forgive my delay in writing to you. The reason is that each day, I have been hoping that the artist would bring me the portrait of Ercole, which my husband

and I are now sending you by messenger. And I can assure you that he is much bigger than this portrait leads one to believe, for it is already more than a week since it was painted. But I am not sending you the measurements of the boy, because people round here say that if children are measured and weighed, it stops them growing. Otherwise, I would certainly give you them. My Lord and I both commend ourselves to Your Excellency, and I kiss your hand, my very dear Mother.

Your obedient servant and daughter,
BEATRICE SFORZIA D'ESTE
By my own hand

The wife was exactly the same as were her sister Isabella d'Este, her sister's sister-in-law, Elisabetta Gonzague, and almost all the princesses of that time, at least in the north of Italy—faithful, affectionate, and tolerant. We have seen her proudly jealous and intolerant at her entry to the Palace, whence she had the fair Gallerani expelled ; but that was only a fire of straw, and very soon only the ashes of that experience remained. She tolerates the presence of the child her rival had just presented to the Moor, Cesare. She even goes so far as to allow him to be represented, kneeling beside his father and facing her own son in that picture representing the family gathering, now in the Brera Gallery, the *Pala Sforcesca.* In Italy at that time, as Commynes remarks, there was no "vast difference between bastards and legitimate children." They were brought up together ; all those little folk played, learned, partook of the impartial distribution of slaps, and rose to fame together. It might even happen, as can be seen in the above-mentioned example, that ille-

gitimate children should be depicted at the feet of the Virgin, in a picture of Sacred Life ; this may have been done with a view to encouraging large families, God blessing such. As a matter of fact, these irregular members of the family were often a lucky chance for the dynasty—statesmen, churchmen, captains, they more than once retrieved what their legitimate brothers had lost.

This one was not destined to such high fame, despite the fact that when he had attained the age of six, the Moor considered it was time to allow him a suitable establishment ; and as he was an illegitimate child, his father thought of putting him in the Church. As it happened, the Archbishop of Milan had just died, so why should not young Cesare take his place ? The fair Cecilia Gallerani, already provided with an official husband, found herself in a fair way to becoming the mother of an Archbishop. The Moor, however, was a man of extreme prudence, and before actually committing himself, he opened his heart to the Prior of Sainte-Marie-des-Graces, in whom he had great faith. The latter, taking into consideration the extreme youth of the suggested candidate, managed to dissuade the Moor, so the child continued to lay snares for birds or chase lizards, in company with youngsters of his own age, instead of being placed at the nominal head of one of the greatest dioceses in the world.

There is no evidence that Beatrice made the slightest protest against his schemes. She also accepted, in silence if not in resignation, the

favours it pleased her husband to bestow, after five years of married life, on one of her maids of honour, Lucrezia Crivelli—the same whose likeness, that serious and sweet-looking face, was supposed to be depicted in the painting, the *Belle Ferronnière*, at the Louvre. The Duke's liaison with that celebrated beauty, one of the most admired of Leonardo da Vinci's models, was quite public. If she had caused some violent scene in the Court between husband and wife, there would certainly have been some mention of it in the correspondence of the times. Nothing of the sort is to be found. The only thing that seems to be mentioned is the Moor's violent passion for her, which was destined to be his last. That passion of the Moor's was doomed to die at the passing of Beatrice, leaving behind only traces of his gratitude. A few months after losing his wife, the Duke of Milan handed over the Domain of Cusago to his former mistress, to express his gratitude for " the great pleasure he had always found in her company " ; and as he had had a son by her, named Gian Paolo, he undertook the latter's upbringing. As it turned out later, the Sforzas had no more faithful servant than this man. We scarcely know what Beatrice really thought of these infidelities ; we only know that she did not retaliate in kind.

Her home life included for her, as for most of her contemporaries, intellectual distractions. In her spare moments—that is to say, when she was not occupied by riding or dress constructing—she held a small literary court. What might be re-

marked as especially typical of her, is that this Court was not composed of writers alone, but of painters and soldiers as well, just as would later be the case with the Court gathered together by Elisabetta Gonzague, at Urbino. There the *Divina Commeddia* was read, and debates held on the pre-eminence of Dante and Petrarch—Bramante, Calmetta and Niccolo da Correggio arguing for the first ; Gaspare Visconti and the Duke and Duchess for the latter. Bramante the architect there displayed his gifts as critic and wit. Long discussions took place on the respective merits of Roland and Renaud—Galeazzo de San Severino holding for Roland, Isabella d'Este for Renaud, and Bellincioni judging the contest.

Above all, there was music played. Women's taste for the plastic arts is often artificial, but it is rare that it is not spontaneous where music is concerned. At that little Court, Cristoforo Romano temporarily relinquished his profession of sculptor and goldworker, to accompany a sonnet or a song on his lute, or else, maybe, with the other musicians of the Court to follow in Beatrice's train when she went on her travels. Bramante deserted his plans and stonework to arrange scenes for the comedies, and Leonardo da Vinci laid aside his encyclopædic dreams to design cupboards. It will never be known how much artist's time and labour these Mecenas of the Renaissance wasted when they had the luck to encounter those artists, and of how many masterpieces they thus deprived us ! But such prodigality of time is the very atmosphere

of the Renaissance. Active life, at that period, was the supreme work of art, where the living forces of genius were diffused day by day instead of being concentrated in distinct and lasting works. That is how such a dazzling recollection has been left to us of it.

Beatrice had neither a very bright understanding of objects of art, nor a very deep soul. Besides, she was not very old ; and generally it is the years in their passage that, like water lying on some object, give a semblance of deepness to the mind. Moreover, she was eclipsed by her sister, the keen and already famous Isabella d'Este, and comparisons were constantly being made between them, whilst poets sang their praises. Bellincioni used to say :—

> La ride e scherza or alle due sorelle :
> E chi sono ? Isabella e Beatrice
> Qui sono aperti i fiori, e verde e l'erba.

When two sisters are equally admired, equal in looks, success and good fortune, it is a rare thing if they are not united. When one of the two hears speak of a triumph of the other, she does not quite know whether she ought to be proud or jealous ; she is usually a little of both, and it is doubtless that complex and unstable spirit that is called the "family spirit." Towards Beatrice, Isabella was a poor sort of sister ; but as regards Isabella, Beatrice was simply crazy. Ludovic adored his wife, but it was of Isabella that he used to ask advice, and to her he used to relate all he did. Every week, a messenger left for Mantua,

bearing queries and confidences; and in such matters as affected art and literature, Isabella was always the first to be consulted. Besides, having lived many more years than her sister, patronized many more artists and arranged, herself and according to her own fancy, much more palace-work and its consequent decoration, it is she who really figures as Mecena[1] in history. Yet Beatrice too was surrounded by artists, poets and men of letters. She was also something of a Muse and made her mark sufficiently for Castiglione, twenty years later, to be able to tell Giuliano the Magnificent, in the *Cortegiano*, when speaking of Isabella d'Este: "I find it a matter of sorrow, too, that you should not all have known the Duchess Beatrice of Milan, her sister, in order that you might no longer be surprised at a woman's wit."

In truth, many of the interlocutors of the *Cortegiano* came too late to have known her. Like that beautiful Simonetta, or like Albiera degli Albizzi, Giovanna Tornabuoni, Marietta Strozzi, Beatrice was destined to live longer in men's imagination than in their eyes. Eight years had not elapsed since she had posed for our bust of the Louvre, perhaps not one since the portrait in the Pitti, before it would henceforth be necessary to refer to these images to revive her memory. On the first day of the year 1497, she was calm, seemed happy, and was expecting another child. On Monday, January 2nd, after her usual full

[1] See *Masks and Faces* at the Louvre and Florence. Isabella d'Este and Her Allegories.

day, she went to Sainte-Marie-des-Graces, to pray at the tomb of the young Bianca Sforza de San Severino, who had recently died. It is said that on that day she remained a long time, overwhelmed with pain and lost in memories. Doubtless she looked at the work then being carried out by Leonardo da Vinci in the Chapel and her melancholy was thereby increased. The painting represented a long table where a master has gathered his friends and pupils for the pascal repast, and says sweet but strange words which sound like a farewell. What we merely see to-day as a vanishing phantom, must have seemed to her then like a nascent apparition. It is related that she could not make up her mind to leave the Chapel. She had tenderly loved that daughter of her husband, who had been married to the handsome Galeazzo de San Severino and died in a few days, at the age of fourteen. It was necessary to tear her from her reverie, and she returned peacefully to the Castello in her carriage. At eight o'clock in the evening, when dancing was going on in her apartments at the Rocchetta, she was seized with the pains of her delivery ; three hours later, she gave birth to a dead child, and expired a few minutes afterwards.

It was only two centuries later and on account of another Princess, that the horror of such a night, the consternation of a whole brilliant Court in ball dress, and the panic in an immense Palace populated with courtiers, were to be worthily depicted. Contemporaries relate that, the same

night, fiery signs appeared in the Lombardy sky and that a wall in the garden reserved for Beatrice, fell down. A much more tragic disaster was soon to follow—the fall of Ludovic the Moor. It seems that he at once had a presentiment of this, so overwhelmed was he by the blow. A few hours afterwards, he wrote to his brother-in-law, the Marquis of Mantua :—

Most Illustrious Ally and Very Dear Brother,

My wife was seized with sudden pains yesterday at eight o'clock. At eleven, she gave birth to a dead child, and half an hour after midnight, yielded her soul to God. So premature and cruel an end has filled me with such bitter and indescribable consternation that I had far rather have died myself than lose what I held dearest and most precious in the world. In the great and excessive pain that I feel beyond all measure, and knowing what yours will be like, I feel I must tell you myself, on account of the brotherly friendship that exists between us. I beg of you to send no one to offer me consolation, as such would only renew my grief. I have not wished to write to the Marquise and leave you the duty of breaking the news to her as seems best to yourself, knowing full well that her grief will pass all bounds.

Lodovicus M. Sforzia, Anglus dux Mediolani.

Milan,
January 3rd, 1497, 6 *o'clock.*

There was public mourning for her. Costabili wrote from Milan to the Duke Ercole d'Este :—

Most Illustrious and Excellent Lord,

Although I received a messenger, instructing me not to leave my house before the evening, as no one of your august family was able to be present at the funeral of our late and very illustrious Lady Duchess, the Duke at four o'clock sent two councillors to bring me, and accompanied by these gentlemen, I went to the *Camera della Torre*, at the Castello, where I found all the Ambassadors, the Duke's councillors and a great number

of gentlemen assembled. As soon as I arrived, His Excellency sent for me and I found him on his bed quite prostrate with grief and more upset than I have ever seen anyone. After the usual greetings, I attempted, as some of his councillors had begged me to do, to exhort him to have a little courage and patience, trying every expression that came into my mind at the moment, and counselling him to bear this cruel blow with fortitude, because in that way he would lend courage to Your Excellency and help you to bear your pain and would at the same time, calm the anguish of his own subjects and restore hope and peace to their hearts.

The Duke thanked me for my kindness and told me that "he could not bear such cruel pain without giving free rein to the feelings of his heart and that he had sent to fetch me in order to tell me that if, so far as he was aware, he had not always conducted himself as well as he might have towards your daughter, who deserved all the happiness in the world and had never caused him personally the slightest pain whatsoever, he implored both Your Excellency's pardon and hers, for whom his heart was now broken." He went on to tell me that "in every one of his prayers, he had asked our Lord God to allow the Duchess to survive him, because in her reposed the trust and peace of his soul. Since such had not been the will of God, he prayed and would never cease to pray that, if it were ever possible for a living being to see the dead, God would grant him the favour of letting him see her and speak to her once more, because he had loved her more than himself."

After many cries and lamentations, he ended by begging me to assure Your Excellency that the love and affection he bears you will never be lessened in any degree, and that he would retain the same feelings towards you and towards your sons as long as he lived, proving by his actions the depth and fidelity of his thoughts. Then, as I took my leave, he told me to follow the body, and had a fresh outburst of sorrow, lamenting in so genuine and natural a way that the very stones must have been moved. Thus, still weeping, I went out and rejoined the other Ambassadors, who all came up to me and expressed their sorrow and their sympathy for Your Excellency in terms full of warmth and compassion.

The obsequies that followed were celebrated with all possible pomp and magnificence. All the Ambassadors present at Milan, amongst whom were one from the King of the Romans, two

TOMB OF LUDOVIC THE MOOR AND BEATRICE D'ESTE, BY CRISTOFORO SOLARI, SURNAMED THE GOBBO.

Chartreuse at Pavia.

To face p. 88.

from the King of Spain and others from all the States in Italy, raised the body and carried it to the first gate of the Castello. There, the Privy Councillors took the body in their turn and at the corners of streets, groups of magistrates waited to receive it. All the relatives of the Ducal family wore mourning hoods and long cloaks that dragged along the ground. I walked first with the Marquis Ermes and the others followed according to rank. We bore the body to Santa Maria delle Grazie, accompanied by a numerous following of monks, nuns and priests, who all carried gold, silver or wooden crosses, and a great number of gentlemen, citizens and common folk—a crowd representative of every rank and class—all weeping and making great lamentation for the great loss that the death of the Duchess must prove to the city of Milan. There were so many wax candles that it was a magnificent sight to see them ! At the doors of Santa Maria delle Grazie, the Ambassador waited to receive the body, and taking it from the hands of the principal magistrates, bore it to the steps of the High Altar, where the Very Reverend Cardinal Legate was seated in his purple robe between two Bishops, and where he himself read the entire service ; and there the Duchess was placed on a bier draped with cloth of gold bearing the Sforza arms. The body of the Duchess was clad in one of her richest *camoras* of gold brocade.

My dear Lord, besides the extraordinary demonstrations of grief to which the entire people of this city—women as much as men—gave itself over, I must tell you—what may be a source of great comfort to Your Excellency—how admirably, more even than others, the Lord Galeazzo de San Severino, both in words and deeds and demonstrations of grief, shewed the affection he bore the Duchess,[1] and acted in such a way that everyone

[1] One is rather surprised to see the envoy of the Duke of Ferrara make special mention of this grief, for it appears that it should be a matter of course. Was there some reason to doubt it ? Reading this letter four hundred years later, one is rather inclined to suspect that there were some nasty rumours prevalent which it was thought necessary to contradict ; examination of documents confirms this impression. However incredible it may appear, the poisoning of the Duchess by one Francesca del Verme, acting by Galeazzo's orders, was hinted at ; but everything belied this hypothesis. It is by no means necessary to evoke the idea of poison to explain Beatrice's sudden death, which was like that of so

was apprized of the virtues and goodness of that very illustrious lady. Such things I considered it my duty to tell Your Excellency, in the hope that it might alleviate somewhat your grief, begging you to keep the same courage as you have always shown until now.

Your Excellency's servant,
ANTONIUS COSTABILIS.

We now find revealed the great characteristic trait in Beatrice's destiny. Her life is a short but a gay one. At a single move, she leaps from childhood to marriage, to government on the throne of one of the most powerful cities in the world and goes on her way, without the slightest hesitation. One day, she was talking to her dolls ; on the next, she is making speeches to the Doge, the Ambassadors, and to the King of France. She is embarrassed by nothing, has fear of nothing, settles all difficulties by leaping over them, just as she passed over obstacles when hunting the stag in the woods of Vigesano. Marriage, travels, triumphal entries into towns, receptions of Kings and of the Emperor, Coronation, childbirths and embassies—all these rush precipitately past the astonished gaze of onlookers like a nightmare hunt. A burst of laughter, the clatter of galloping hoofs, a tinkling of bells, baying of hounds and the blast of a horn, and then—silence, that silence which follows the drop into eternity. It is all over. She is not yet twenty-two.

Her very Palace, that immense Castello composed

many young women at that period in Italy. It is not said that Galeazzo bore the Duchess any grudge. Finally, the Moor, who regretted his wife so deeply and possessed a thousand means of subtle investigation, had no suspicion of poisoning. Far from showing the least coldness towards Galeazzo, he loaded him with favours.

of castles fitting one into the other, like a Chinese puzzle, seems like a stage erected for a one-day's act. It is quite new when she comes to it, and as soon as she leaves it, it commences to fall to pieces bit by bit. Scene-shifters carry off one day its treasures, the next its framework and accessories. It is beseiged, bombarded, pillaged. It was only the dummy of a fortress, one concludes, and doubtless the eighteen hundred cannons on the walls were only for show, for it never resisted the summons of a fresh attacker to surrender. Century by century, it was emptied of its contents. One day, the central door collapses, another day a tower—until finally the back scene trembles and falls at a sign made by the greatest scene-shifter of modern times, on his return from Marengo. And to-day, although all is rebuilt in the exact semblance of the past, it would be as vain to seek walls in the Castello that saw Beatrice d'Este as to seek phantom villages in the Champ-de-Mars or the Invalides where a woman's face was seen in 1889 or 1900.

Chapter III

A FETISH

AS FOR LUDOVIC THE MOOR, the loss of Beatrice left him inconsolable. Henceforth he wandered through the castle like a soul in torment, lamenting his misfortune, dreading other disasters, listening to the approaching tread of Destiny, and enquiring of all the echoes of the immense Palace, what he had lost.

What then had he really lost? A wife—no, a fetish. His despair was not simulated; he was really overwhelmed by this unexpected blow, and felt a great void before him, a black and gaping abyss, where everything grew dark. The change in him was noticeable from day to day, and he began to make a regular worship of the memory of the dead woman. Her room, draped in black, became the *Camera nigra*; he removed the effigy of the Roman Emperor from the ring he wore on his finger, and replaced it by Beatrice's. He brought impassioned care to the building of her tomb in the *Cappella Maggiore* of Sainte Marie-des-Grace, now united to the Chartreuse at Pavia. Cristoforo Solari, known as the *Gobbo*, the best sculptor he could lay his hands on, the finest blocks of Carrara marble, and the most learned humanists

were collected together for the work and the inscriptions. He desired that his dead duchess should be represented as she loved to appear during her lifetime, dressed in the height of fashion. As for himself, he had himself sculptured lying down, stretched at her side, as though Death, by taking her, had deprived him as well of all reason for living. Finally — and this was the strangest thing of all—he lived devoutly and chastely from that day until his death.

However, such despair was not born of his love. He had not been in love with his betrothed, for he was then passionately attached to the fair Gallerani. Nor had he been faithful to his wife, for five years after his marriage—and two months before she died—a Ferrarese wrote : " The latest news from Milan is that the Duke spends all his time and takes all his pleasure in the company of a Maid of Honour to his wife, and such conduct is noted here with disapproval." The lady in question was the beautiful Crivelli, the supposed model for the *Belle Ferronnière*. He felt vaguely, however, that Beatrice had played a part in his life that no other could have taken—that of luck bringer. She was exactly what he was always pressing his astrologers to discover for him in the sky : his lucky star. What took place in her presence had ever a happy result, and for that reason it was his desire to have her constantly near him. She never leaves his side at the most tiring ceremonies ; even when she is expecting her child, as the Venetian envoy remarks. She is there at

the most critical period of his conferences with the French Ambassadors, and he only separates himself from her to send her on that difficult mission to Venice, where she brings him luck, and succeeds better than he would have himself.

Indeed, let us study her closely. Everything about her—her commonplace and gay appearance, her carelessness and frivolity, all are attributes of a fetish. She even brings luck to herself, and her success at play is proverbial, for she wins every time. She is lucky at hunting; braves danger with impunity, and escapes from it laughing. Almost all men who have had an unhoped-for rise in the world, escaping numerous dangers, believe in their star, and this was one of the especial weaknesses of Ludovic the Moor. It was natural that such a star should be identical in his mind with his wife. He had drifted in the direction of power without her, it is true, but it was from the time of her coming into his life that his rise to the summit started, when his hand was laid over the whole of Italy, and his prestige unequalled in Europe. A coincidence, a mysterious connection between cause and effect, chance, perhaps—but the fact remains. From the death of his brother, the Duke of Milan, in 1476, until his marriage to Beatrice, in 1491, he had climbed, in spite of many obstacles and numerous checks, the various steps separating him from the throne; but it is only after the 17th of January, 1491—that is to say, his wedding day—that the curve of his destiny rises sharply.

All of a sudden that young woman steps ahead of her cousin, Isabella of Aragon, Duchess of Milan, now become her niece, and gathers around her a brilliant and cosmopolitan Court destined to eclipse all others. Almost all the States of Italy treat with the Moor as though he were master of Lombardy. His prestige increases to such an extent that in 1493 he can marry his niece, Bianca Maria Sforza, to the Emperor Maximilian, and it is due to that that he secretly receives the promise of his future investiture as Duke. In 1494 he succeeds in a much more difficult enterprise, by allying himself to the King of France, and persuading the latter to make a descent on Italy. Just at that time—on the 20th of October, to be exact—his nephew chances to die, leaving a widow too young and a child of too tender an age, for power to be entrusted to them. Under such circumstances, the Moor gets himself elected to the throne, and publicly receives his investiture from the Emperor on May 16th, 1495. The latter even goes so far as to accord him an honour rarely bestowed on the rulers of Italy. He comes to visit him at Vigevano, and consents to be godfather to his eldest son, whose name is changed thereafter from Ercole to Massimiliano.

From that time dates his apotheosis. The friendship of that great humanist ruler, the legendary figure of the Renaissance, goes to his head. "I am the child of Fortune," says he. "All that this man attempts succeeds, and all that he dreams of during the night, comes to pass during the day,"

explains a contemporary, who adds: "In truth, he is esteemed and respected throughout the whole world, and considered as the wisest and happiest man in the whole of Italy. Everyone fears him, for he is Fortune's favourite in all he lays his hand to."

Poets are still more generous in their eulogies on diplomats. Visconti wrote to him:—

A te, mio Duca celebrando Moro
Non mai manca desio de eterna fama
Da poi Che vachi al gubernal lavoro
De tutta Europa che ti onora e ama.

He was renowned as the leader of the Golden Age: who could be a Cæsar in war, and an Augustus in peace; milder and juster than Titus and Trajan, and endowed with the riches of Cresus. Though the hyperbolical exaggeration of praise due to a prince was usual and, so to speak, obligatory at that period, the eulogies on Ludovic the Moor were above the generality. Pistoia, for example, went so far as to say to him:—

Ben puoi dir, Signor mio, ho nelle mani
Il cielo e'l mundo tutto sotto il manto,

a thought which was taken up later on by the author of the *Lamento*, when he caused the following words to be sung to the Moor in his prison, in memory of those happy days:—

Io dicevo che un sol Dio
Era in cielo et un Moro in terra
E secondo il mio desio
Io facèvo pace et guerra

Such was still the good fortune of the Moor on the 2nd of January, 1497.

Three years later, what had happened to that good luck of his? If we would gauge the depth of his fall, let us turn to the letter which the Venetian Ambassador, Trevisano, wrote from Lyons, to the Seigneurie :—

LYON,
May 2nd, 1500, *Evening.*

To-day, before two o'clock, the Lord Ludovic was brought into the town. This was the order of the procession : First came twelve officers of the city guard, to prevent the crowd which filled the streets from shouting. Then came the Governor of Lyons and the provost of justice on horseback, and then the said Lord Ludovic, wearing a coat of black cloth, black breeches, riding boots and a black barretta that he held in his hand most of the time. He looked around him, as though he had made up his mind to express none of his feelings in this catastrophe of his fortunes. He was very pale and appeared very ill, although he had been shaved this morning, and his arms and whole body were shaking. Immediately after him rode the Captain of the King's Archers with a hundred of his men.

In that order they led him through the town to the castle on the hill, where he will be well guarded during the coming week, until the cage which will be his dwelling day and night, is ready. This cage, from what I have been told, is very strong and made of iron set in wood, so that the iron bars, instead of being capable of being sawed through with a file or any other implement, would throw out sparks. I must not forget to tell you one thing that happened. The Ambassador of Spain and myself were at a window together when the Lord Ludovic passed and the Spaniard was pointed out to him ; he took off his hat and saluted. On learning that I was the Ambassador of Your Most Serene Highness, he stopped and appeared about to speak, but I made no move and the Captain of Archers, who was riding near him, shouted out, " Forward ! forward ! " Later the Captain related this episode to the King, who asked me, " Did you get the impression that he refused to salute you ? " adding that men like him who did

not keep their word, were worth nothing, etc. And I replied that I should have felt more shamed than honoured if I had received any sign of courtesy from a being of that kind.

The King was in his palace and had watched the passing of the Lord Ludovic, and with him were a number of lords and gentlemen who spoke much about the Moor. His Most Christian Majesty says that it has been decided not to send him to Loches as had been the original intention, because he goes there himself at certain seasons of the year for a holiday and prefers that the Moor should not be there at the same time, as he does not want to see him. So he has decided to send him to Lys-en-Berri, a couple of leagues from Bourges, where the King has a very strong castle with ditches broader than those of the Castello at Milan, and full of water. This place is in the centre of France and under the command of a gentleman who was Captain of Archers when His Majesty was Duke of Orleans, and he has a troop of proved guards specially chosen by the King himself. When the Moor dismounted from the mule he was riding, he was transferred to the castle, and, I am told, he is so weak that he cannot climb a single step without assistance, from which I gather that his days are numbered. I recommend myself humbly to Your Most Serene Highness.

BENEDICTUS TREVISANUS
(*Knight, Senator*).

What, then, happened between these two dates? The death of Beatrice d'Este.

From the moment her presence vanishes, signs of unpopularity begin to manifest themselves. Alliances are broken off, and rulers commence to withdraw their support. By a sort of fatality which cannot be really explained, the Moor sees all his intriguing brought to nought, and his agents, who had united the threads of it so well until then, now find doors and mouths closed to them. In April 1498, he learns of the death of Charles VIII, and the accession to the throne

of France of his mortal enemy—the Duke of Orleans. From that time, the curve of his destiny falls headlong. Rome abandons him for the French, Venice as well; whilst the small states on the frontier of Piedmont no longer dare to give him their support. Even Ferrara, despite his father-in-law's sympathy, is now neutral, whilst Mantua—although Isabella d'Este made desperate efforts—becomes hostile. An icy wind, a wind of treachery, passes over the whole of Italy, and very soon he can count no longer upon any but states which are weak and menaced themselves—Naples, Fiorli, Bologna—that is to say, on nothing. There only remain his distant, very distant, allies: the Grand Turk—a vain hope—and the Emperor Maximilian—purely an honorary alliance. Meanwhile Louis XII, the new King of France, passes the Alps, and is approaching with thirty thousand men—an enormous army of soldiers for that time—commanded by Trivulce, a Milanese renegade, and a personal enemy of the Moor. The Sforza fortresses fall one after the other, and treachery works its way into the towns. Pavia closes its gates to the ducal army, and in Milan itself, the secret wish of the crowd is for the French. One of the Moor's faithful people, Landriano, the Treasurer, is assassinated by the mob in the open street. Louis XII may come; he will find as many partisans inside the town as outside.

There remains the Castello, which can only be captured after a long, a very long, siege, and Ludovic hopes, while the French are attacking it,

to find help in Germany. He starts secretly for the Tyrol, confiding the citadel—the last stronghold of Sforza power—to a tried friend, Bernardino da Corte, who swears to defend it to the last gasp. Eleven days do not elapse before he surrenders it to Louis XII. The King of France cannot believe his eyes when he enters and sees with what supreme art the Moor had planned this fortress. All had been foreseen to stand a long siege, right down to a system of signals to communicate with outside by day and night. Ludovic as well cannot believe what he reads when he receives the fatal news. He remains stupefied, and for a long while dumb. "There has not been a greater traitor than Bernardino da Corte since Judas!" he finally mutters.

A few months afterwards, when he endeavours to reconquer his dukedom, in a supreme effort, at the head of troops raised in Switzerland, he has for an instant that illusion of a return of his good fortune. He re-enters Milan, and the populace, already disgusted with the French, acclaims him—but this only for a little while. This Saint Martin's summer lasts a bare thirty days. A new French army, commanded by la Trémouille, enters Lombardy. The Moor tries to fight at Novara, but is abandoned by all. The Swiss suddenly refuse to fight against their compatriots in the pay of the King of France. Betrayed by his mercenaries as he has been by his friend, he tries to save at least his person. Disguised as a Swiss soldier, he is about to escape and leave Novara mingling with the troops that are permitted to go, when at the

last moment his handsome face is recognized by a man from the canton Grisons—one Turmann. He is denounced, and handed over to the French. From that time his rôle is finished, and a painful martyrdom begins, which will only close at his death.

This martyrdom of his is more moral than anything, and consists of indefinitely thinking over his lost happiness. The iron cage described by Trevisano appears indeed to have been only a legend. His captivity for four years in Berry, and then four more at Loches, however hard it may have been, did not exceed, or even equal, punishments usually inflicted at that period on prisoners of state. It was a measure of precaution imposed through policy by the new master of Milan upon a still popular adversary who was an ally of the Emperor, and secretly supported by religious factions. A cruel measure certainly, but Louis XII, whilst obstinately refusing him his liberty, did not absolutely lack humanity towards his prisoner. He used to send him his doctor, allowed him to receive letters, and one day even brought one of his dwarfs from Milan to amuse him. The Moor must have suffered much less when he was transferred to Loches. The cell, which is still pointed out as his customary dwelling—a dark den cut in the solid rock—can only have been used by him a short time. Doubtless he was placed there after an ill-starred attempt to escape, which caused his captors to restrict his liberty, a very little while before his death.

His real punishment, that constant martyrdom during those eight years of detention, was not his physical suffering, but was the painful contrast between the present and the past. Amongst the inscriptions which he amused himself by painting with a brush in red and blue letters on the walls of his cell, to relieve the boredom of his long captivity, the following is noteworthy :—

He is not a very wise man who does not fear Fortune,

and this other one inspired by Dante's famous lines :—

There is in the world no greater distress,
Than to remember one's good times in times of sadness.

He could no more escape the memories of the past, than he could escape from his prison.

Another punishment, more subtle, but just as intolerable to that philosophical mind, was not to be able to clearly understand the reasons for his downfall. According to the testimony of a faithful servant, who, in order not to leave him, was willing to be buried alive in his cell, he constantly harped on one idea. His incomparable misfortune was doubtless, he used to say, a punishment from God ; for " the power of Fate alone would have been able to thwart to such an extent the counsels of human wisdom."

To-day, looking back over four centuries, and with a crowd of documents to hand which he could not know of, that is still the view that seems most reasonable to us. The more one examines

the Moor's destiny, his prodigious rise, and his deep fall, the less can one comprehend the reasons for this. Machiavelli, who had been present at all these events, and who was not considered as a mind devoid of penetration, says somewhere : " It is not rare to-day to see Princes fallen from a state of prosperity to one of misfortune without being able to attribute their disgrace to a change of conduct or character." And although he does not specify that his talk concerns Ludovic the Moor, it is so apt that it is hardly possible that he should not have had him in his mind.

Without any doubt the Moor had faults, weaknesses, and inconsistencies, which in such difficult times might have brought about a catastrophe. There are several of such faults of conduct or character which meet the eye. For example, it is quite evident that it was madly imprudent on his part to have called the French into Italy. In order to be able to judge his artless sufficiency, it is enough to read the letter written to his brother, the Cardinal Ascanio Sforza, at the very moment when Charles VIII was preparing his expedition :—

There would be great difficulties in the way of preventing the French from coming [says he], and even were that not so, I must confess to you that I consider it necessary that they should be brought here, not that I desire it, nor that I seek the ruin of King Alphonso (Alphonso of Aragon, King of Naples), towards whom I am well disposed, as you will soon see ; but I wish to make him come down to a point where the immoderate greatness to which we have elevated him will not permit him to forget, as his father before him once conveniently managed to forget, that he must conduct himself as an equal and not as a superior

towards the other Italian rulers, and especially towards us. In order to bring this about, it is necessary to give him enough to think about in his private affairs to prevent him from interfering with those of others. *It is essential, therefore, that the French should make a descent into Italy.*

However, in order that the results of their invasion may not exceed our requirements and culminate in the complete ruin of the King of Naples, I have undertaken what you know of—that is to say, that the King of the Romans (Maximilian, Emperor of Germany) should cross the Alps at the same time. Such a counterpoise will prevent the French from labouring under the delusion that they are greater than they happen to be at present. The above Prince has no more wish to see the French power greater than have we. He is our ally by marriage, and is very keen to recover in Italian affairs that superiority that should be his by right of his possession of the Imperial throne. *It will therefore be possible to fix a limit to the progress of the French.* . . .

He is rather like the man who sets fire to a whole town to cook his supper. Disaster is coming closer and closer, and his pot is overturned. Very aptly, amongst the bearings or *imprese* of the Sforzas, there was a design representing burning brands with buckets suspended from them. The Moor justified the half of this emblem; he was very well able to kindle such brands, but when it came to extinguishing them, it was quite a different matter. One cannot, moreover, conceive of a worse place to try such experiments. Milan, situated in the midst of the richest but most open plain, at the very cross-roads of invasions, was the magnetic pole for all desires, the Mecca of all the plunderers in Europe, who watched from behind the jagged barrier of their mountains for some favourable moment for a *coup de main*. It may be added that the treasure of the Sforzas, contained

in the Rocchetta, was considered the richest that existed, and gleamed in distant minds like a beacon. With all this to be taken into consideration, the Moor had the imprudence to draw towards Italy such covetousness. He willingly admitted Ambassadors and the principal ladies of the town to visit this treasure. After one of such excursions, the Ambassador of Ferrara wrote to his Government :—

In the Silver Room, spread on the ground were carpets about sixteen arms-lengths long and three arms-lengths broad, and thereon lay a great many bushels of ducats, in all sorts of coin varying from three to ten or twenty-five ducats each, the total of which was estimated as amounting to six hundred and fifty or eight hundred thousand ducats. Then there were long tables, on which were laid out the jewels, chains and golden collars of their Highnesses —a very beautiful and valuable display. There were sixty-six silver *sancti* all round the walls of this room, together with three or four beautiful crosses loaded with precious stones. Then there was the Annunciation and the Coronation of Our Lady, with great decoration of angels and other Saints, that was not the least beautiful of the treasures there. Finally, in a corner of the hall there was so much silver money, piled in such a great heap that a stag could not have leaped over it, in every description of coin. There were also silver candelabra, of the size of a man or thereabouts. At last we were admitted to the place where the silver of greater value was kept. The whole treasure was valued at one million five hundred thousand ducats.

Its present value would be about sixty-five million francs. Such artless ostentation reveals to us another of the Moor's weaknesses, and one of the most fatal to him—his too great faith in money. True it is, indeed, that money had been the principal architect of his fortune. With it he had bought the Emperor's sanction to his dukedom of Milan ; he had bought Genoa with it ; and it had bought

over the Swiss—but when he found himself in the presence of people who were not for sale, either perchance because they were honest or because their ambition was greater than their cupidity, he was baffled. As he had imprudently displayed his wealth, he saw coming against him the needy, the sharpers, and the starvelings of Europe, whose rapacity had been whetted by the tales they had heard of his affluence, and who judged that they would be very foolish to content themselves with a small tribute when they had the chance of seizing all. Money is a good arm, but an arm of utility, not of threat, for that causes envy instead of fear, and attracts attack rather than commands respect.

To live in security in the midst of that Milanese plain that was so easy of access on all sides, it was essential that no one's cupidity should be stirred, or that every possible attacker should be frightened off. His evident plan should have been to either carefully conceal such wealth, or have a strong national army well trained and closely united to its people and its leader, and one that could be relied upon in the time of danger. Now, the whole of the Moor's policy was directed towards making alliances instead of raising armies, and in counting on distant and tardy succour instead of organizing an immediate defence on the spot. It is evidently to him rather than any other that Machiavelli applies this sentence : " Alliances made with Princes who would find it difficult to bring us help by reason of the distance they are separated

from us have much more of brilliance than of real utility about them." Although he was a poor strategist, the Moor was a great patron of the Arts. Posterity lauds him for this, and congratulates itself on the fact; but his contemporaries were scarcely of such an opinion, since they wore themselves out in pandering to his need. To provide for his taste in luxury and art, he brought such pressure to bear on his subjects that people in Lombardy began to wonder if it were really better to live under the dominion of the Sforzas than under that of the French.

The above are indeed imprudences, and it is easy to comprehend that they should one day draw down the lightning on his ducal head. "Imprudence," however, is a word which, when applied to that old fox, would have greatly astonished his contemporaries. Prudence it was, in their eyes, which formed his dominant trait, the others being courtesy and intellect. The latter qualities he indeed possessed to a high degree, but, to counteract them, he was cursed to a still higher degree with a weakness that paralysed them and rendered them unavailing—vanity. That "prudence" so esteemed by his contemporaries must be understood to apply to his skill in hatching intrigues and his small taste for danger. "He was very servile when he was afraid," Commynes, who saw him under such circumstances, said of him. It was related of him, not in a joking way, but as a proof of common sense, that when Italy was threatened by the plague he had all letters coming from the

infected countries opened by Calco, his secretary. The Moor was thus more prudent than heroic, but he was more vain than prudent; and when one follows—with that fact in mind—the labyrinth of his policy, one perceives that he gave himself away more than once through sheer pompousness.

One day he yields to the pleasure of having his treasure admired by the Ambassadors of the King of France, enumerates and evaluates the pile of jewellery, kindles their covetousness, and then dismisses them with presents which they might perhaps have considered generous if they had not seen so many more beautiful things, but which disappoint them just like a tame ending to a wonderful premise. Another time he cannot refrain from remarking that the King of France has offered to give him Florence—this at the very moment when such a remark should not have been made, in order that there might not be trouble with the Florentines. When the Emperor Maximilian comes to visit him, his vanity grows to such an extent that he seems quite unbalanced by it. His megalomania, perhaps more verbal than anything, takes the shape of expressions offensive to everyone at once; he cannot refrain from saying: "The Pope is my chaplain, the Emperor my General, the Seigneurie of Venice my stewards, and the King of France my courier." He has himself represented on the walls of the Castello, beside an allegorical figure of Italy, a woman, whose head, shoulders, and cloak bear the arms of the principal towns of the Peninsula. He, the

Moor, armed with a brush, the *scopetta*, a symbol borrowed from his heraldic bearings, is brushing the cloak of Italy to remove the dust from it. *Per Italia nettar d'ogni bruttura*, as the legend goes. He never clearly explains the bounds of his ambitions. Is it northern Italy that he wants for his own, or is it the whole of Italy? The answer is not known, but what we do know is that one by one his neighbours become alarmed and estranged from him.

In the same way, his vanity overrules his courtesy. A man of wit, he falls a victim to the chief weakness of such, which is to display that wit. When Peter de Medici, who for a long time opposed the coming of Charles VIII into Italy, sees himself constrained to amend his views, and arrives at his Court, and says to Ludovic: "Sir, I came to meet you, but it seems that you must have gone the wrong way, for I was unfortunate enough not to encounter you," Ludovic replies: "It is certain that one of us went astray, but is it not you?" By thus pointing out to him his mistake in not taking his advice before, Ludovic had his revenge on the Medici, but at the same time gratuitously estranged him from him.

It was not only that he brought too much wit to bear in his state affairs, but he allowed himself too much sentiment in them as well. He had a lively affection for that young man, Galeazzo de San Severino, who had married his natural daughter, Bianca. Now, Galeazzo was a very heroic soldier, but an extremely poor General, and by giving him

preference over Trevulce, the best tactician of his time, the Moor made of the latter an enemy who was at once irreconcilable and wary. A single fault of such colossal dimensions easily counterbalances a thousand efforts of skill. In the same way, his liking for Isabella d'Este made him lose sight of his own interests from the time that he began to place excessive confidence in the Marquis Gonzague, who was in no way deserving of it.

From these examples, and many others, it may be seen that the Moor was not such an impeccable statesman as his flatterers desired to make of him, but all these weaknesses with which he was constantly afflicted, and which were part of his very nature, did not seem to damage him in the slightest degree as long as Beatrice d'Este was alive. Why did they loose the whirlwind on him from the moment that she was no longer there? That is just where the mystery lies, and it is by way of explanation that the idea of the word "fetish" has been resorted to. Such an explanation is of little value, but no other is as good. A very slight thread is sometimes sufficient to knot together the various features of our nature and the multiple circumstances of our fortune; but when that thread is lacking, luck seems to be absent as well, and we are left alone with empty hands. Another conundrum which is poorly explained by history is the outburst of terrible joy that shook the whole of Italy at the downfall of the Moor. Messengers dashed about the Peninsula bearing enthusiastic dispatches; Rome, Venice, Naples and many

other towns were lit up. At Venice, where we have seen how Beatrice had been received, the populace sang :—

Ora il Moro fa la danza
Viva Marco e'l re di Franza !

From the point of view of interest alone, this matter is inexplicable, for if the Moor had been a menace, France was a much more redoubtable enemy. From the point of view of Justice and Right it is hardly more clear. The bitter grievances held against him—the usurpation of his nephew's throne of Milan, and his appeal to the foreigner—might be pretexts for hatred, but they were not reasons. Indeed, he could plead "not guilty" to the accusation that he was a usurper. The Princes whom he had deprived of their thrones were fond of the honours and pleasures which power brought them, but neglected their responsibilities. By governing effectively and refraining from seizing their titles he was relieving them of a burden, rather than depriving them of an office. As for the pretended assassination of his nephew, Gian Galeazzo, whom it was said he had poisoned in order that he might take possession of his dukedom, no vast credence was given to this rumour at that time any more than it is believed in to-day. Everything tends to belie such a theory. In any case, this grievance was already six years old at the time of the Moor's fall. During those six years foreign Kings and Italian rulers had been friendly towards him, and it would have been a very daring

pharisaism for any intelligent person who was really keen on justice to hold him innocent of such a crime so long as he remained the "Child of Fortune," and to only recognize that he was guilty of it when his luck changed. There, again, the reasons alleged by his enemies are mere pretexts.

His real crime, which is undeniable and indefensible, lies in his having called the foreigner into Italy. This offence, which was peculiar to every beaten party in those days, or to every Prince jealous of his neighbours, would not have appeared worse than any other similar appeals to the "barbarians" had it had no graver consequences. But it fell to his lot to unloose the greatest invasion that had overwhelmed the Peninsula since the days of antiquity, and if we study the matter in that light, we can understand the animosity stirred up against him by his imprudence. The form which that animosity assumed alone remains quite unintelligible, for to punish him for having called the foreigner into Italy and having handed over to that same foreigner towns which he did not possess, to protest against the invasion by acclaiming the invader, is so irrational, or even unreasonable, a policy that the cause must be sought elsewhere than in reason!

It must be sought for in a single sentiment—jealousy, the colossal jealousy which his insolent good fortune had aroused. It was not known to what might be attributed the prodigy of such constant good luck. The Moor's fall was the breaking of a charm that had proved oppressive

to both reason and criticism. Italy was freed from the spell, and though her release had come about by the hand of the foreigner, she found herself able to breathe more easily. Later, views were changed, and on reflection it appeared that the foreigner, however great his merits, was unbearable, not having reached the same stage of civilization ; that very hard treatment had been meted out to a man who was generally kind to others and to the weak ; who had employed civilized rather than uncivilized methods ; who had outstepped his time in many things, and brought renown to Italy.

Ludovic the Moor then became the most pitiful example of all his century, and of the whole of Europe, of human vicissitude. The story of his life was passed down like a legend from generation to generation, and from one country to another. His captivity and death, worthy of a philosopher, were the means of setting an ineffaceable halo around his head. Poets, both in France and Italy, sang of his misfortunes in laments that became popular until justice was finally done to him in the long run.

In the beginning, however, his fall and his misery were the cause of great joy to almost every ruler. Jealousy, improvidence, and ambition are quite common human attributes and present no vast mystery ; but what is mysterious is that such jealousy should be given vent to so late. . . . There again, we find that this coincides with the death of Beatrice. It appears that, so long as her presence was felt, envy was disarmed. So much

success and grace was forgiven, and that insolent good fortune appeared less insolent as long as it assumed the mask of a young woman who was still almost a child. It is therefore to that childish and sprightly mask that we must come back if we wish to realize the fortune of Ludovic the Moor in tangible form. It is under such guise that she must have appeared to him, at every fresh blow of Fate, framed in the happy memory of days gone by. She it was he gazed at fixedly on the evening he left Milan to go and seek assistance in the Tyrol, and it is said that he remained for hours before the tomb of Beatrice in Sainte-Marie-des-Graces, so that it was necessary at last to tear him from his reverie. It was her that he glimpsed in the depth of his memories when he made that moving entry into Lyons that Trevisano describes, and it is probable that he then saw her as a quite young girl, just as she appeared to him the first time, and such as our bust at the Louvre represents her. Thus it was that Cristoforo Romano unconsciously created the image of a fetish when he carved her likeness in marble.

Quite as unwittingly, the most ignorant visitor passing through the Michel Angelo Room at the Louvre and catching sight of that lively and chubby little face feels something that is not present in all the busts in the gallery, and which he has not experienced before thousands of antique statues—the presence of a quickening influence and a secret power. That is also doubtless why we ourselves have halted so long before her.

If you wish to see this same bust, slightly thickened by age and lying in death, framed with loosened falling hair, you must take the train from Milan to Pavia and get off at a little station called La Certosa. It is in the depths of the country, right in the heart of the rich Lombard plains, with their reddish earth furrowed by the blue streaks of their water veins. At first glance nothing seems to justify a halt in such a desert spot, with no town or village close by, and with just one or two farms dotted about. A few children are splashing about in the red mud; perhaps a horse or a donkey are passing. . . . Maybe in the oppressive silence of fields and orchards one hears a warbler trilling the same airs it sang in the time of Beatrice d'Este; yet bit by bit one catches sight of something red and black on that slight swell of the ground, through the screen of trees that spring is slowly beginning to reconstruct. It is the Chartreuse of Pavia.

Over there sleeps the mysterious Prisoner of Loches, lying on the stone pavement of the transept in an atmosphere of calm, light and glory. The marble of his tomb, of the colour of old ivory, seems to throb gently in the ever-varying light. His lowered lids, looking as though they are sewn to the cheeks by their long marble lashes, cover for ever the great dream of his life—that confused dream of a kingdom of Liguria and Insubria, of all Italy perhaps—which historians imagine they can see etched in his restless mind, but which incessantly changes in shape like a cloud sweeping across the immense deserted plain. . . . Maybe, he

himself has not been able to unravel, in that long sleep of his, the complex web of his ambitious thoughts.

There was one definite point in his life, and one only—Beatrice d'Este. She, too, is there in full Court dress, a marble toilette rubbed and polished like white jade; a net of diamond pattern cuts her dress; enormous *sbuffi* puff up at her elbows; whilst streams of ribbons, thin and flat, wind from her shoulders to her feet. Her hands are folded in the skin of a marten—whose muzzle and marble eye seem ironically to be alive—her feet compressed into high pattens which can no longer make her any taller, and have no apparent use except to elongate her figure on the dress already longer than its wearer, who seems lost in a maelstrom of folds, embroidery, braid and tassels. She, too, sleeps in that absorbed way which the dead have.

Both of them, looking inwards at a vision that seems very far from us, and borne away to a planet other than ours, seem to be continuing a journey that has no ending. Infinity separates us from them. Of whatever description our information, be it official writings, letters, or monuments, we cannot help feeling, in the presence of these sphinx-like faces, that there is in every soul some mysterious part that is not expressed in words, and perhaps not well known to its own self, which is the most essential part of all. In the middle of the twentieth century, and on to that ground pregnant with history—the history of France as well as that of Italy—this marble seems to have fallen like a fragment from an unknown world—a meteorite from the past.

SECOND PART

ISABELLA OF ARAGON

BOLTRAFFIO : PRESUMED PORTRAIT OF ISABELLA OF ARAGON.
Ambrosian Library, Milan.

To face p. 119.

ISABELLA OF ARAGON.

AT THE END of the little Ambrosian Gallery at Milan, in a small room known as the *Gabinetto Leonardo*, and placed fairly high up with other drawings contained in the same frame, is one of the most perfect bits of work ever produced by hand of man—one of those which realize the miracle of actual presence, of life and beauty, with a few deft pencil-lines. It is a portrait of a young woman with lowered eyes, drawn in carbon, with here and there touches of dry colour—a little brick-red on the cheeks, canary-yellow on the hair, a suspicion of coral-red on the necklace. The light falls from the left, accenting and shadowing the right cheek, the right nostril, the right side of the lips, and the space from the chin to the right shoulder. The hair, divided in the middle with a parting from the forehead backwards, flows down on each side in thick soft waves. There is no jewellery, but only two circlets, guessed at rather than seen—that is to say, a fillet on the forehead and a necklace at the throat. Finally, a low-necked, square-cut bodice, with a suspicion of sleeves, puffed up at the shoulders and light as mist, the whole shaded with strokes of carbon; altogether, the same sort of toilette as that worn by Isabella d'Este in Leonardo da Vinci's drawing at

the Louvre. That is what one distinguishes at first, but on closer inspection one notices a phenomenon peculiar to this sketch. This face possesses four eyes : two in their place in the face, completely drawn and modelled, but scarcely visible under their lowered lashes, and two wide open but reduced to the globes and pupils, with no surrounding flesh, along in the margin of the paper, on the high right near the frame, looking at us as we imagine angels might look at us if they are ever curious as to what we do, and as the other eyes of this portrait would look if one day their lashes were to lift.

Like the portrait of Isabella d'Este at the Louvre, this one lives its mysterious life, surrounded by the fancies and dreams of Leonardo da Vinci—waving hair traced with a silver point on bluish paper, gun-carriages, winged horses, hydraulic engines, flying machines. . . . But nothing, amongst all these rough drawings of a new world, is richer in intrigue and mystery than this sketch, which is not even by Vinci, but by Boltraffio, withdrawn from the main road of tourists and scarcely mentioned in guide-books. I do not think that there is a single face in all that gallery, in the whole of Milan, living or dead, that stays longer in the memory of whoever has cast eyes on it. What was that woman, perfectly beautiful, but so modest and quiet that her beauty gets overlooked, like that beauty of the Virgins lowering their eyes towards the Child Jesus, in order to only remember their destiny ? What is the secret those

lips are closed on? What is the object of interest to those wide-open eyes taken from a living face, up there near the edge of the frame? Maybe we shall never discover that. . . . But since that head is sometimes, even fairly commonly, supposed to represent a portrait of Isabella of Aragon, and that, on confronting the dates, the hypothesis is possible, let us evoke its image before us an instant, and try and imagine what its distant past was like, just as Leonardo, four hundred years ago in that same town, endeavoured to imagine, on leaflets saved from oblivion, a confused sort of future for aviation and ballistics which has to-day been realized. The chroniclers of the fifteenth century tell us that this Isabella of Aragon [1] was

[1] Portraits of Isabella of Aragon.

ORIGINALS :—

First.—The three-quarter head of a woman, in crayon, with the inscription: ISABELLA D'ARAGONA MOGLIE DI GIO GALZO SFORZA DESIGNATO DA BERDARDINO DA CONTI MILANESE. (Uffizi Gallery.)

Second.—The right profile of a woman's head, painted in fresco, with the inscription IX.B.L., attributed to Luini. (In the *Castello Sforcesca*, Milan.)

Third.—The right profile of a woman's head, veiled; medal of Cristoforo Lombardo, with the inscription: ISABELLA ARAGONIA, DUX MLI. (Bargello, Florence.)

Fourth.—The right profile of a veiled woman, bust and hands, before a crucifix, her hand on a book, painted as a pendant to a portrait of Gian Galeazzo Sforza. (Marquis Trotti-Bentivoglio's Collection, Milan.)

Fifth.—The carved medallion, right profile, above the centre of the arched entrance of the *Porta della Stanza del Lavabo.* (The Chartreuse at Pavia.) Presumed by some authorities, the full-face woman's head, a carbon drawing relieved with colours, by Boltraffio, entitled, *Portrait of a Woman*, and framed with three other drawings. (Ambrosian Gallery,

accustomed, from the middle of her life, which was a long one, to sign her letters *Isabella de Aragonia unica in disgracia*—which seems at first sight to be somewhat presumptuous. But when we follow her along the path she treads, amidst the snares and precipices, the Princes and bandits of the Renaissance, we soon come to recognize that no one has more claim than her to the privilege of misfortune. If there be a hierarchy in misfortune, she has many different rights to occupy the supreme position in it. The daughter of Alphonso of Aragon, King of Naples, and a Princess of Milan, Ippolita Sforza, she had been a long time betrothed to her first cousin, the young Duke of Milan, whom she had never seen and did not know except through his letters, written for him by the Court poets, and left all her parents at the age of seventeen to come and live in the north of Italy. The Castello of Milan, especially in winter, must have seemed hyperborean after the terraces of the Uovo, on the Bay of Naples She was marrying a delicate and careless young man, with long fair hair, the curved Sforza nose, a passionate lover of dogs and horses, and bored with everything that had not

Milan.) Identification disputed by Malaguzzi Valeri, who states with much verisimilitude this portrait to be the head of the *Santa Barbara*, by the same Boltraffio, in the Berlin Museum —a picture, moreover, very inferior to the drawing in question.

On Isabella of Aragon—Philippe de Commynes: *Memoirs*. Bellincioni: *Rime*. Octavien de Saint-Gelais: *The Vergier d'Honneur*. Guichardin: *History of the Wars in Italy*. Marino Sanuto: *Diaries*. Pelissier: *Louis XII and Ludovic Sforza*. Carlo Magenta: *I. Visconti and Sforzas in the Castello of Pavia*. Malaguzzi Valeri: *The Court of Ludovic the Moor*. Delaborde: *Charles VIII's Expedition into Italy*.

to do with stag-hunting or casting the falcon into the blue of the sky. A picture of a vividly realistic character, now preserved in the Wallace Collection, shows us this Prince, still a child, sitting on a brick seat, and reading Cicero with as much zest as though he were reading a forbidden book. If we possessed only that evidence of the youth of Gian Galeazzo Sforza, historians would be representing him as a humanist whose works have been lost. Unfortunately for him we have other evidence, which leaves us in no doubt whatsoever that the son of Galeazzo Maria and Bonne of Savoy, who had succeeded to the Dukedom at the early age of eleven through the sudden disappearance of his father, was quite incapable of bearing that burden.

Happily for him, he had at his side one of his father's brothers, Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Bari—that is to say, Ludovic the Moor—who relieved him of all the cares of government; and, since he was as indifferent to the effective realities of power as he was incapable of them, only caring for honours and especially pleasures, the young Duke showed himself profoundly grateful to his uncle for so profitable a usurpation. But one can conceive of the surprise of Isabella of Aragon, when she arrived at Milan in January 1489, on perceiving that she was being married to a mere dummy. Etiquette, indeed, allowed her first place in the Court where there was, however, no other woman to dispute it with her. Her mother-in-law, the Duchess Bonne of Savoy, was kept at a

distance by Ludovic the Moor, and besides, that "lady of little sense," since she had become infatuated with a squire, had lost all her prestige. No one any longer paid attention to her. The Duke's sister, Maria Bianca, future Empress of Germany, was then only sixteen, not yet married, and had no claim to first place in the Castello. Nor was Ludovic the Moor married at that time. Isabella of Aragon therefore reigned without female rival, but in appearance only. For example, it was not long before she noticed that when the Ducal family were passing through the streets, people did not shout, "*Duca ! Duca !*" but "*Moro ! Moro !*" and that the rulers of Italy and the foreign Princes themselves continued to treat directly with Ludovic the Moor, the Regent, as though the nephew, who had been his ward, had remained a child.

It is true that these are very minor miseries for a woman who is young, beautiful and fond of pleasure. She might have been easily distracted, in the brilliant Court of Ludovic the Moor, if Gian Galeazzo had appeared to her as the hero of romance which the letters she had received before leaving Naples had led her to believe; if their happiness for two had caused her to forget that there were such things as precedence and etiquette; if, in a word, instead of a real Sovereign, she had found at Milan a real husband. But there, again, the young Princess was destined to have more painful surprises. It had been a matter causing no little comment in Italy that this uncle and

Regent, so jealous of power as he was, should have counselled his ward and nephew to get married, thus allowing the question of a possible heir to make eventual ursurpation doubly difficult. Astonishment ceased, however, when it was learned that the expected or dreaded heir was neither to be hoped for nor feared. The days sped along, and there was nothing to herald his coming, and the Moor's enemies then charged him with the blackest and most complicated machinations.

The King of Naples, on his part, endeavoured to make profit out of this incident. In view of the fact that ten months had already elapsed since his daughter's marriage, without any attempt on the part of the Duke to consummate it, he found an excellent pretext for not paying over to Milan the twenty thousand ducats that he still owed on the promised dowry. He even threatened to take back his daughter. . . . Ludovic the Moor then caused the culprit to appear before his tribunal—composed of himself, the Archbishop and some notabilities of the town—and, alleging State reasons, rated him for his backwardness in assuring himself of an heir. The incident became exaggerated and finally international. The various Ambassadors drew up diplomatic notes, that commenced in low Italian and continued in Latin, in order to report the affair to their respective Governments. In that wordy and scandal-mongering village that was Italy in the fifteenth century, all the Courts were talking for awhile about nothing else.

At last, as the year 1490 was drawing to a close,

Isabella of Aragon brought a son into the world. The Moor's innocence was established, for not only was it a child, but it was a son and heir! The sorrow and anguish of the young foreigner at the Court of Milan up to that point can be imagined, but they were not destined to cease with the birth of the beloved *duchetto*, who was baptized Francesco, after the great Sforza. Gian Galeazzo, when not out hunting, used to give himself over to the lowest kind of debauches. Wine—and, it seems, the worst of wine—appeared to have a far greater fascination for him than his wife. "There is nothing fresh to relate to you," the Duchess of Montferrat wrote from Milan to Mantua on May 2nd, 1492, "unless it be that the Duke of Milan has been beating his wife. . . ."

Our misfortunes and unhappiness are often caused by comparisons, and, in the case of women, immediate comparisons. Isabella was perhaps the only woman at the Court of Milan who would have suffered such decadence; but in the meantime a parallel but infinitely happier destiny, comparable in everything and superior in all, was commencing to weave its web close to her. Ludovic the Moor had just wedded Isabella's first cousin, Beatrice d'Este, a few years younger than her, and who thus became her aunt. The Duchess of Milan had gone with great ceremony to receive her at the gates of the town, and there, from her very first step in her "Ducal" life, the little cousin had made a gesture that seemed to claim precedence. From that day—that is to say, from January 22nd,

1491—there were two Sovereigns at Milan, one alone entitled to be so called and already there, the elder by four years; the other newly arrived, still almost a child and only possessing the somewhat exotic title of Duchess of Bari, but a wife, and the much-loved wife, of the real master, and of a genuine statesman—a very ambitious woman, moreover, quite resolved to reign in the feminine domain of luxury and festivity as her husband already reigned in the domain of politics and Art. From that time onwards there was rivalry at every instant between the two Princesses, at first quite involuntary and unremarkable—indeed, scarcely felt. Neither of the two was animated against the other by any hostile sentiment. Lively, sprightly, affectionate, still almost children, and having played a long time together on the terraces at Naples, having both, moreover, the same blood in their veins, Beatrice d'Este, the daughter of Leonora of Aragon, and Isabella of Aragon took every possible precaution so that their mutual harmony should not be disturbed. But facts, that are stronger than wills, malignantly brought them into opposition with each other, and a secret rivalry came about through a thousand daily comparisons, fostered, it is needless to add, by their respective courtiers.

It was at first a rivalry of dolls or of elegance. Ludovic the Moor used to cover his wife with jewellery, drawn from the inexhaustible treasure in the Castello. He used to decorate her like a shrine, finding a youthful joy in seeing her childish happiness. Isabella of Aragon, to whom by rights

all of the Ducal treasure should have belonged, felt no resentment at seeing her cousin twinkling with brilliants like a constellation ; but the equilibrium between the two Courts was thus upset, and that is what distressed her. "She says," wrote the Ambassador of Ferrara, "that she would like to be treated neither more nor less well than the Duchess of Bari, and would desire the Duke Ludovic might imagine that he possessed two daughters or two wives, and make no difference between them, treating them both in the same way ; and she would be content with that, without wishing to possess the value of a *bagatino* more than the Duchess of Bari."

It does not seem that such was by any means the case. "The pearls of the Duchess of Bari were much bigger and finer than those of the Duchess of Milan," writes the Ambassador of Ferrara on May 1st, 1492, when giving an account of a mounted excursion carried out by the two Duchesses across country, in full Court dress, with horned headdresses bedecked with pearls and long silken veils, to celebrate the return of spring. Such inequality struck everyone that saw it, and there is no mention of the fact that the Moor took any great pains to conceal it. On the evening of November 15th, in the same year, he exhibited Beatrice's jewels at Vigevano to the gentlemen of the Court and the Ambassador ; these jewels were then valued at 100,500 ducats. It is true that he had ordered a ruby for the Duchess of Milan—that is to say, Isabella of Aragon—but the persons

present did not estimate the value of this at more than 13,000 ducats. There existed the same difference between their respective hunting equipages. Beatrice possessed fourteen of the swiftest and handsomest saddle-horses that could be found, not only in Italy, but in the whole of Europe, with, as an eyewitness remarks, "harness fit for an Empress." Isabella of Aragon's mounts were far less numerous and, what was more noticeable, far less smart. Doctor Carri, who took part in a hunting excursion and was provided with one of her horses, found it so quiet that he was satisfied that it was a "real lady's palfrey."

Then, again, there was rivalry between the two women in sport. When the two Duchesses went off for a day's hunting through the fields and woods of Vigevano, accompanied by their ladies, their cavaliers and their pages, it seemed as though that brilliant outfit were a continuation of the children's games started years before beside the Bay of Naples, with its "big squires" to mark the points and poets to sing about them, and a competition to see who could ride fastest. In this case, however, the stake was a far bigger one. In those furious gallops, where Beatrice flung herself headlong, facing the stag at bay or the wild boar in his lair, jostling and spilling the maids of honour, it would have been a confession of weakness and loss of prestige for the Sovereign in title to remain behind, hesitate at an obstacle or recoil before danger. The wife of so laggard a husband must be the first in everything, inside her own domain, if she

wished to retrieve a little of the prestige her lord lost for her. For that reason she flung herself after her young cousin and aunt, sometimes even managing to pass her. . . . The same thing was constantly occurring in the games and dances of the time: the *pala*, the *paume*, the *hat*. Every day new occasions for pitting themselves against each other would arise out of the circumstances of the Court. The Ambassadors gravely kept count of the alternating wins of this incessant match, and in a diplomatic note of the time may be found the following: "Yesterday the wife of the Duke of Milan and the wife of the Duke of Bari held a contest; it was the wife of the Duke of Bari who got the better of her opponent."

Finally, there was rivalry in their motherhood, beside which their rivalry in other matters was of no account. They were of no account in reality, and the two cousins remained in perfect accord so long as there was only one possible heir to the Dukedom of Milan in the Castello—that is to say, the little Francesco, the *duchetto*. For a long while Beatrice was to him a second mother, declaring that he was like her very own child, since she could play with him. Perhaps she really believed that. However, one fine day, January 25th, 1493, she had a son in her turn, and that son, who was received with the honours reserved for royal children, in a golden cradle, amidst the demonstrations of joy of a whole people, was considered by friends of the Moor as an heir presumptive. From that moment everything was changed, and

it was no longer possible for the two cousins to conceal the fact that they were rivals, since they possessed the same ambitions for their two sons, that in the case of one could only be satisfied at the expense of the other. Even so, the situation might have been somewhat easier if the Moor had only maintained a little secrecy about his projects! As long as he had been a bachelor and alone with his nephew and niece, he had contented himself with the realities of power, disdaining or putting aside its honours. But with him, if the husband had already showed less reserve, the father showed none at all. The coming into the world of the little Ercole was trumpeted abroad like that of the Dauphin. For six days the bells were rung, and processions of thanksgiving were held in all the churches and monasteries in Lombardy. Those in prison for debt were released. The Moor's colours were everywhere displayed. As much had not been done, two years before, for the real heir to the Throne! The thing was too patent to escape the notice of Isabella of Aragon, and if she would not have paid sufficient attention to it, her mother-in-law, Bonne of Savoy, was at hand to keep her informed of the slightest signs, urged on by the unresting hatred she bore the usurper.

To crown her disgrace, Fate, doubtless desiring to parade the rivalry of the two Princesses before the notice of all eyes, brought to each of them a child in the same week and the same place; but whereas Beatrice gave birth to a "fine boy," it was a "poor girl" that fell to the lot of Isabella.

Both young mothers were complimented at the same time, but it was only natural that the arrival of a little Princess should not be celebrated with the same *éclat* as the advent of a little Prince, and especially of a first-born. Thus it was that the stream of Ambassadors, Councillors and notables of the city passed before Beatrice's bed, and it was in her apartments that the crowd swarmed to admire the presents bestowed on her to celebrate this occasion, that were visible behind iron bars and duly guarded by armed sentries. On the same day, in her immense and deserted Corte Ducale, Isabella of Aragon only received the dregs of the visitors or a few of those absent-minded ones who mistake the doors at every ceremony of the sort. In the same way, when the Court astrologer, without whom no one dared take a single measure in those days, had made up his mind that the two ladies might go out for the first time and proceed to Sainte-Marie-des-Graces to render thanks to Heaven, in great state and covered with gold brocade, silk, furs and pearls, it was Beatrice who was the cynosure of all eyes.

Isabella's character was never the same after that day. There are some vanities and desires that only come to mothers, and though the Princess of Naples had managed to resign herself to being the wife of a mere dummy, she would never be able to resign herself to the idea of her son not being the master. From that time dated a struggle that was never ceasing, and all the more painful inasmuch as it had to be kept secret. Little by little

she saw the Moor putting forth his hand to seize the Ducal crown for the benefit of himself, and later of little Ercole ; but standing alone of her own family, a minor in her own palace and a stranger, she could rely on no one, little or not at all supported as she was by her husband, to turn aside that gesture. As Commynes remarks : " There was no lord who could prevent him taking the Dukedom for himself save the wife of the said Duke that was young and wise " ; and he adds : " The said girl was very courageous, and would willingly have given credit to her husband, had she been able ; but he was hardly reasonable, and used to reveal what she told him." Indeed, the poor Duchess of Milan had no greater traitor amongst all her surrounding than her own husband. As soon as she proposed some plan to him for safeguarding their patrimony, Gian Galeazzo could not prevent himself from going straight off and telling it to his uncle in exchange for some fresh pleasure or sporting birds that the Moor knew well how to contrive for him.

In this way the future began to assume a very sombre appearance to this still youthful woman, scarcely five years after her marriage. Everyone in her own circle betrayed her. Would help come to her from outside ? And whence could it come ? From her own people ? The relations between the Court of Naples and that of Milan were already very strained, owing to the constant complaints of the Duchess to her father and brother and the defiant attitude of the Moor to the megalomania

of the Aragons. Secret letters from Isabella left for Naples, requesting help. Her brother, Ferrante, swore to have vengeance on the Moor, but his more prudent father confined himself for some time to written manifestations. Moreover, the cunning Duke of Bari was already planning sufficient work for them at home to leave them scant leisure to occupy themselves with his affairs. The unfortunate Princess very soon learned that no succour could reach her from the south!

Would help come to her from France? That was not impossible. The "Barbarians from the North" were making a descent on Italy. The "Naples enterprise," so long deferred and held up for so many years by the mountain barrier, was about to be carried out. The King had "passed over" the Alps, and was expected from one day to another. He was known to be just and good. Maybe he was destined to be her saviour. The unfortunate Charles VIII, so weak and ill-favoured by Nature, led hither and thither by his advisers, headstrong only over two or three ideas—which, besides, were wrong ones—appeared to a whole crowd of people as an archangel come from Heaven to restore all to order: the Church, the liberties and the rights of the weak and oppressed. Isabella did not at first consider him in that light. Charles VIII was to her mind an enemy, since he was come to Italy for the express purpose of turning her father and brother out of their kingdom. She declared that she would never agree to see him. The gestures of antiquity being then in fashion,

she seized a knife and exclaimed that she would thrust it into her heart rather than touch the hand of the King of France.

Then she reflected, and asked herself whether the humour of this Sovereign were so constant that she might not hope to derive some benefit from its manifestations. Charles VIII was the nephew of Bonne of Savoy, who had also been dispossessed by Ludovic the Moor ; he must have been put on his guard against the usurper a long time since. It would therefore not be impossible that this enemy of her father and brother should come to her in the guise of a friend. She would then be able to win him over to her cause, and perhaps even to the cause of her relatives. But in order to bring that about, it was necessary to communicate with him, state her fears, claim his protection in sufficiently clear terms—in fact, see him when the Moor was not on the scene. Meanwhile, Gian Galeazzo had fallen ill, and was in bed, confined to his castle of Pavia, and incapable of going to meet the King. She was unable to leave him because of the possibility of his being poisoned. It was the Moor who had brought Charles VIII into Italy ; he was his impresario, the one who planned his itinerary for him, and who had no desire to have him listening to the moanings and complaints of his nephew. He increased the number of hunting-parties and comedies and all the pastimes calculated to keep him away from Pavia ; and when at last it became necessary to receive him there, he arranged lodgings for him, under

pretence of doing him greater honour, outside the Castello where Gian Galeazzo lay shut up. All that was of sinister presage.

Happily, amongst the few ideas he carried in his head, the King had one to which he clung tenaciously, and that was to see his cousin the Duke of Milan. It was for him a family duty. He also wanted to see Isabella of Aragon, but that was worldly curiosity on his part, and no stratagem of the Moor's could hinder him from satisfying it. On the day that he said, putting aside everything else, "I wish," his desire to be brought to the invalid's bedside had to be complied with. But the Moor accompanied him there, and his gaze—the gaze of the master—did not leave the poor fascinated lad in the bed for an instant. The interview was carried out with "words that were only on general things," says Commynes. However, little Francesco being present, Gian Galeazzo recommended him to the King's favour, and the latter, taking the child in his arms, promised to treat him as he would his own. The visit was about to close with a commonplace exchange of affectionate wishes, when Isabella, "very pitiful to see," according to Commynes, but braver than her husband, and feeling that the decisive moment was about to pass and might never return, appeared to make up her mind. Abruptly breaking the protocol, she threw herself at the King's feet, and in words trembling with emotion, implored him to give up the idea of the Enterprise of Naples.

Charles VIII was far from expecting such a move, and remained at first aghast. All the same, he was not really displeased at being considered as a *Deus ex machina*, transforming everything as he passed. He raised up his cousin, with a few courteous and deprecatory words on the fatality of warlike enterprises, and gave her to understand that "she had greater need to pray for her husband and for herself, who was still a fair and youthful lady." The royal discourse was not remarkable for its extreme clearness nor for the vast confidence reposed in the "listening brother" who was present at the interview, but the main thing that could be understood was that the expected saviour was not going to save anything. As she listened to the steps of the guards who escorted the King of France growing fainter along the passages of the Castello, Isabella felt indeed that her last hope, as much for herself and her son as for her father and brother, was leaving her.

Very shortly afterwards, Gian Galeazzo died. He had not yet attained the age of twenty-five. He died amongst his horses and his dogs, which he had had brought right into his room, so that he might see them for the last time. It is a question that has been greatly discussed by historians, as to whether he was poisoned by his uncle. To explain away the gastro-enteritis that carried him off, it is sufficient to recall the excesses he committed all through his life, the formidable gluttony he manifested, even during his last days, in the moments of respite after his violent attacks. Moreover, at

the time of his last illness, his uncle was not there ; his wife and his mother were both present and watched over him unceasingly. As for the doctors whom Ludovic the Moor sent to him, he obeyed them so little and applied himself so zealously to carrying out the reverse of their prescriptions—not, as one might imagine, through defiance, but through gluttony—that it will be an excellent and never-ending subject for debate between specialists to find out whether he died through having occasionally swallowed their drugs or through having more often than not dispensed with them.

In any case, natural or unnatural, that end fitted in too well with the schemes of the Regent for him to feel an excess of grief. The note is still in existence, on which the doctors wrote from Pavia to Placenza where he then was, telling him that the sick man was *in extremis* ; and one can still read, in a corner of the paper near the sign of the gibbet, the words : *cito*, *cito*, *cito*—urgent, urgent, urgent. It is easy to conceive the feelings that those three little words awoke in that ambitious mind. The most coveted crown in Italy, and one of the most brilliant in the world, was now for him and for Beatrice. He had in his pocket the promise of Maximilian, King of the Romans, to bestow on him the imperial sanction, if the throne chanced to fall vacant. One thing alone might have held him in check in normal times : the hostility of the Princes of Aragon, who reigned over Naples, and perhaps that of the Pope ; but under existing circumstances, the Princes of Aragon had much ado

to safeguard their own crown. The presence of Charles VIII with his formidable army paralysed all disposition to intervene. At any other time, too, Charles VIII as well would probably have raised some objection to such a juggling trick, but at that moment, with his gaze fixed on Naples and his every effort bent on its conquest, he had no intention of leaving an enemy in his rear when he might leave an ally.

That is what appeared very concisely to a "Barbarian" who had come from the North, but it seems that Italian trickery did not prevent Philippe de Commynes, who was then Ambassador at Venice, from seeing the whole matter clearly. "I saw this news," says he, "from the letter of the Venetian Ambassador who was with him (Ludovic the Moor), that he wrote to Venice with the warning that he desired to make himself Duke. To write all the truth, this news displeased the Duke (the Doge) and the Seigneurie of Venice, who came to ask me whether the King would not stand for the child. And I put them in some doubt as to whether such a thing was reasonable to expect, in view of the business the King had in hand with the said Ludovic. In the end, he got himself accepted as Lord, it being to this end, as several said, that he had brought us over the mountains, and he was held responsible for the death of his nephew, whose parents and friends in Italy were on their way to wrest the government from him, and had easily accomplished this if he had not been the ally of the King. . . ." If the

death of Gian Galeazzo was the outcome of a crime, Charles VIII's conduct on this occasion is indeed difficult of explanation. If that death was natural, then we must agree that Providence seemed to be at the Moor's beck and call, and we must not be surprised if, on the day he appeared in the streets of Milan, clad in cloth of gold and heralded by all the bells of the city, he exhausted the whole of the good luck that a man may reasonably expect to bring into the world with him.

Isabella of Aragon, for her part, seemed to have exhausted all the bad luck she should expect; but this was not the case, and the approaching future was bringing her worse agonies to endure. In the first days that followed the death of her husband, it seemed to all who saw her, that it would be her end as well. Shut up in a dark room with all the shutters closed, prostrated on the ground, dumb and haggard, refusing all nourishment and haunted by nightmares, she lost interest in all that had not to do with the past. At the start fears were entertained for her life, and later for her reason. It was a cause of some wonder that a husband, who was so little to be desired during his lifetime, should be regretted to such a degree after his death; but it might be supposed that the despair that had engulfed her had its origin in many things: the certainty that her son would never be ruler of Milan, the fear that her father and brother would soon be driven from the throne of Naples, and then the thought that Gian Galeazzo had died so young, before his twenty-

fifth birthday. "That stainless lamb," according to the hyperbolical epithet of Corio, might become a decent husband, with the passing of time. When one studies his portraits, especially the one painted by Ambrogio de Predis, one is apt to doubt whether so weak and pliable a nature was really fundamentally bad and capable of active evil, any more than it was capable of active good. One thing is certain, that he was mourned by his wife as though he had been a hero. The new Duke of Milan, who bore no hatred towards his victims, and even had a certain amount of sympathy for Isabella, was greatly startled at the state of prostration she was reported to be in. Four of his councillors presented themselves at her house at Pavia, to offer her their condolences and invite her to return to Milan, in the name of the new Duke and the people, assuring her that she and her children would be treated with the respect due to them and would be permitted to retain, as their own property, the residence they had formerly occupied in the Castello.

This attention aroused her from her stupor. She was touched by it, and by her orders the following note was written to Ludovic the Moor: "My sovereign is very happy," writes Paolo Bilia, her secretary, "to learn that you have accepted the present which she sent you, and she is grateful for the amiable messages that she has received from your illustrious wife (Beatrice d'Este), as well as for the offers you have made her and the visit of your councillors. Thanks to the treatment of Niccolo de Cusano, her health has certainly

greatly improved; the children are doing well; the only thing is that the little boy does not like wearing black clothes nor seeing the rooms draped in black."

When finally, and after many requests and goings and comings, the young widow made up her mind on a dull winter's day to leave Pavia and return to the Court, that in future would no longer be her own, every attempt was made to render the transfer less painful for her. An eye-witness, the witty Barone, who in his rather clownish over-confident way was very devoted to the Marquise of Mantua, wrote to the latter: "Last night the Duchess Isabella arrived at Milan, and our Duchess (Beatrice d'Este) went out to meet her about a couple of miles outside the town, and they were once more together. Our Duchess got out of her carriage and climbed into the Duchess Isabella's, both of them weeping in heartrending fashion, and thus they journeyed to the Castello, where they found the Duke of Milan come to meet them on horseback, at the castle gates. He doffed his hat and accompanied them to the Castello, where all three alighted, and placing the Duchess between them, our Duke and Duchess conducted her to her old apartments. When they were arrived there, they all sat down and the Duchess Isabella could do nothing but weep, so much so that finally the Duke began to speak to her, and begged her to calm herself and take courage, with many like words. The hardest heart must have been touched with compassion at the sight of that woman with her

three little children, thin and worn out by grief, wearing a long black nun's dress, made of a cloth divided into four equal parts, her eyes being hidden by a thick black veil. Assuredly, so far as I myself was concerned, I was unable to refrain from groaning, and if I had not kept a strong hold on myself, I should have wept still more ! "

If poison had played the part attributed to it by historians in this tragedy such a scene would have exceeded in horror and treachery all that is known to us of the crimes of the Renaissance ; but neither Isabella at that moment, nor those who had been present at the dying man's bedside, believed in the theory of poison. She was thus spared the shame of living alongside the supposed murderer of her husband. It was bad enough to know that he had robbed her son ; for that matter was now an accomplished fact, without any hope of alteration, and about which there had been no great difficulty. Ludovic the Moor, always courteous and formal, had not snatched away the ducal coronet in a brutal fashion. He had called together the councillors and the notables of Milan and had proposed to them, in the most serious way imaginable, that the power should be conferred on the *duchetto*, then aged four. An unanimous protest had been the reply, and the citizens of Milan, by acclaiming him, had showed their desire that the future government should be the same as the present one. In a letter written the same day to his envoy at Maximilian's Court, the new potentate spoke about the recent death as of a

fact that had compelled him to take away his nephew's succession.

Through her tears and her mourning veils, Isabella of Aragon had not failed to see through this comedy, and returning to Milan, greeted by the Duke and Beatrice d'Este, she felt that she was coming back, not only as a widow but as a stranger, with no hope of regency for herself, nor prospect of throne for her son. This hope was going to be still further removed from her by the birth of Beatrice's second son. While dancing was going on at the Rocchetta on the occasion of the Carnival, and congratulations were being showered about in honour of this second heir, the following news arrived from Naples: that on February 22nd Charles VIII had been crowned King of the Two Sicilies, in the Cathedral. The young King, Ferrante, the brother of Isabella of Aragon and cousin of Beatrice d'Este, had fled to Ischia, his subjects having risen against him, as was the usual custom in Italy when Fortune refused to smile on a Prince in war. So that in that direction also all seemed lost.

Even had she wished to forget it, the little scenes making up the daily life of a Court incessantly recalled to her eyes the picture of her own downfall. To laud the success of the usurping dynasty was, although perhaps unwitting, to proclaim her irretrievable ruin, and in that respect the courtiers were not backward. The ostentatious adulation offered to the heir presumptive of the Moor was equivalent, so far as Isabella was concerned, to the

inventions of the most skilled torturer. Never was there a Dauphin of France whose first gestures, games, wishes or pleasures were so watched for and made much of as were those of this Usurper's son. Traces of them can be found in the miniatures, sculptures and poems of the time :—

> Va per Milano el Conte inamorato
> E da tutte le dame e contemplato,

as the poets said when speaking of the little Massimiliano, Count of Pavia. As she read these verses that should rightfully have been applied to her son, Isabella reached the lowest depth of human despair.

Yet she still hoped . . . but for what? Did her hope lie in some hazard, in something impossible, that statesmen cannot reconcile themselves to, the illogicalness of men and events—as women hope? Up to that date all prosperity that had come to the Duchy of Milan had turned to her own disadvantage; perhaps she based her hopes on its ruin? Who can say what light filters beneath those lowered lids in the portrait at the Ambrosian Gallery? The overbearing good fortune of the Moor could not last for ever. . . . One by one the Princes of Italy were putting themselves on guard against his sinister ambition. The visit of the King of France had left him still more aggressive. The populace, crushed by taxation, were beginning to murmur. Children were wont to cry out *Ducha!* when the little Francesco passed through the streets. If it ever came to pass that the Usurper were driven out by the foreigner or

by the people, what other than the child of Isabella could take his place? Perhaps the young widow waited with impatience for the distant tread of Misfortune all through those long days of her seclusion that followed her period of mourning, when she looked through the windows of the *Corte Ducale*, and saw Beatrice d'Este with her brilliant suite crossing the gardens of the Castello for one of those excursions, where formerly both had been rivals in skilfulness, or else when trumpets heralded the arrival of some new guest. . . .

Misfortune was indeed drawing near, in its two customary forms: death and treason. Terrible news was brought in one day after a series of amusements at Vigevano. The Duke of Orleans was invading the Duchy, had taken Novara, and was already at a point twenty kilometres from Milan. The populace commenced to murmur in the streets and to stone the friends of the Moor. The first alarm over, nervousness was felt as to the fate of the ducal army at Fornua. The star of Beatrice d'Este herself, the great rival of Isabella, was on the wane. The palace was full of intrigues, and at doorways there were whisperings of the infidelities of her husband. The famous Lucrezia Crivelli—the *Belle Ferronière* of the Louvre—began to gain an ascendancy over the Duke's heart. The death of his natural daughter, little Bianca, supervening on these days of anxiety and defiance, seemed a worse presage. The fortune of the Sforzas was changing in aspect; one by one its smiles were fading. Then came Beatrice's sudden death, smiting the

people like a thunderbolt, and leaving the Moor prostrate.

Even in their common grief that should have drawn them together the master's offensive temperament ended by alienating his niece's heart from him. He went so far as to dare to hint to her that she should leave the Castello, and retire to the old Sforza Palace, near the Cathedral. That was a matter of small consequence to her, but at the same time he kept the *duchetto* with him at the Rocchetta—an inexplicable act of cruelty—only permitting him to see his mother once a week. "You have taken away my son's crown, and now you want to deprive him of his mother," she was unable to refrain from telling him then! At last, the Duke of Orleans, now become King Louis XII of France, took the road to Milan again and once more the ducal troops faded away before the onslaught of the French. This time it was the fall of the Usurper. The people rose in revolt, closed the shops, erected barricades, and killed the Moor's partisans who came to parley with them, amongst whom the most famous figure was Landriano, that astute gossip who had had his master elected by acclamation.

It was indeed the downfall of the god with feet of clay. No one had betrayed others like the Moor, no one was so much betrayed. Yet he had betrayed with elegance, courtesy, slowness, by degrees, carrying out what in modern times would be called "evolutions." He was brutally betrayed, delivered up by the very people whom

he had treated well. A few days only were sufficient for his friend, who had sworn to him, in the midst of tears and embraces, to defend the Castello to the last man, to deliver it up to the King of France, in exchange for a share of the booty. The French, who profited by his treachery, were so surprised and indignant that they never forgave the culprit. In exactly the same way the caitiff Swiss captain, Turmann, who handed him over to the enemy, was executed by his own countrymen, who were ashamed to think that there could be such a traitor in Helvetia. But Milan, and it may well be said the whole of Italy, was filled with joy at seeing a new reign commencing. When, to the sound of drums and trumpets, and preceded by five hundred archers, Louis XII made his triumphal entry into the city, under a canopy edged with ermine and carried by Doctors of the University in their red robes, there did not remain a single adherent of the Sforzas in the shouting and applauding crowd that packed the streets. . . .

Amongst all the eyes that were fixed on the King of France on that autumn day of 1499 none were brighter with hope than the eyes, now wide open—as they are at the edge of the portrait—after being kept so long lowered, of Isabella of Aragon. She had put off her mourning and reappeared in her finest dresses. She was recognized as the proud and elegant Princess of Aragon, who put on crimson satin with tassels of gold thread for the wedding of Bianca Sforza, flesh-coloured velvet embroidered with peach blossoms and gauze

aigrettes for the hunting at Vigevano, and for her churching after the birth of her daughter Bona, a dress embroidered with a motif of books and cunning letterwork. She had not run away like the other Sforzas, and as Ludovic the Moor had advised her; neither had she been willing to entrust to him her son, whom he had offered to take to Germany with him; nor start herself for Genoa, where the galleys of the King of Naples awaited her. Alone of all the Sforza family she had remained in the great deserted palace—not through obstinacy of despair, but through the joy of her deliverance. This invasion was not, in her eyes, a menace either to the security of herself or her children; it meant liberty, safety and perhaps restoration. What could the King do with the Duchy of Milan? He could not reign there in person, but would hand over the guardianship of the State to some Prince, and the most evident selection, the legitimate heir, her own child, was on the spot!

It would be sufficient, she thought, for that child to please the all-powerful master, for the crown, that she had so long coveted, to come back to him. He was a handsome lad at that time, was the *duchetto*. His portrait, by Bernardino dei Conti, now in the Vatican, testifies as to that. With his thatch of fair wavy hair, his head-band thick with goldwork, and a splendid bird's feather stuck in the front of it, his slashed sleeves, his chubby pert expression, and his little fist grasping a tiny dagger, he already cut a good figure as a duke.

"An angel!" said his contemporaries, and so he certainly seemed to his mother. Radiant and confident, she brought him to Pavia to greet Louis XII in the midst of all his Court, persuaded that the child would please him and come back as Duke of Milan. He succeeded in pleasing him, indeed, but he did not return, nor did he ever come back. The King kept him near his person, as his ward, a much spoiled and honoured prisoner, whilst he sent back the mother in gilded exile to Milan, with great respect, to dwell in the palace of the Marchesino Stanga. Thus he too separated them, in the same way as Ludovic the Moor had separated them. She was permitted to come once and kiss her child before his departure for France, and then it was all over. She was destined to never see him again. . . .

Of all the misfortunes paving the road that was already so rough, traversed by this woman of twenty-eight, this was the most unexpected, the most grievous and the most irreparable. It was her misfortune *par excellence*, not even to be compared with her others, for there was no comfort to be gleaned from it. How had it come about? To understand it, one must remember that to a politician ambition or State reasons carry more weight than hatred or sympathy. Louis XII had no feelings of animosity towards Isabella or her son. He had had none towards her husband, her father or even her brother. In the first expedition to Italy, whilst Charles VIII's gaze had been directed towards Naples, his had been only to-

wards Milan. Indeed, he was well acquainted with the misfortunes of Isabella of Aragon and the dignity of her life and was sorry for her. Yet what he wanted he intended to get. On many occasions, while he was still only Duke of Orleans, he had remarked that he " would give up the whole lifetime of a King of France to be Duke of Milan for one year." What a fatal mirage Italian soil possessed ! He had now broken down all obstacles, driven off all his opponents, and united all the Princes of the Peninsula, even down to the d'Estes of Ferrara and the Gonzagues of Mantua. The only force that might rise any day against him was the people ; the only name that could give shape to popular sedition was the name of the Sforzas. However weak the present bearer of that historic name and however touching his plight, it would be grave imprudence on his part to leave behind in Lombardy this firebrand of discord or this " brush " to sweep out the French.

In his clear-seeing hatred Ludovic the Moor had quite understood this. Hence his reasons for insisting on Isabella's flight. Through not having listened to him, because his advice had so often led her astray, imagining that he was still only pleading his own cause, whilst he was in reality pleading the cause of all the Sforzas, the poor Princess saw her last hope fading away. Her son was by no means unhappy at the Court of France. He was treated like a little Prince, had his dogs, horses and falcons just as his father had had ; and those horses, falcons and dogs caused in him,

as they had in his father, forgetfulness of the duties attaching to his name. There was little chance that his people would ever again see him in their midst. One might with luck come back from an Italian prison, but did one ever return from a palace in France?

Isabella did not believe so. She realized that the Milanese period of her life was over. Too late she followed the advice of her uncle, reached Genoa, embarked in one of the galleys of the King of Naples, and had herself taken right round into the Adriatic, to the port of Bari. There stood and still stands, abrupt and roughly perpendicular and lacking any grace of architecture, a fortress bleak and windowless as a prison, and lapped by the waves. This is the ancient stronghold of Frederick II of Hohenstaufen and Charles of Anjou, that had become the ducal palace of Bari, restored by the Aragons and given to the Sforzas. Before leaving Milan Ludovic the Moor, yielding perhaps to some scruples, and impelled by his change of fortunes to make drastic alterations in his conduct of the days of prosperity, had felt a desire to do something for his niece to repair in some fashion the past. He had thus presented her, in correct and proper form, with his dukedom of Bari, together with an income of six thousand ducats. In the mighty tempest scattering everything around her this was a refuge for her.

She thus retired there with her two daughters, Bona and Hippolita, never to leave there again until her death. Little by little a small court of

artists and men of letters began to gather around her, and architects endeavoured to impart to the suite she occupied a measure of the comfort and luxury she had known at the *Corte Ducale*, in the early days of her married life. "Duchess of Bari" had been a title that her rival had borne in those brilliant days when she herself had been Duchess of Milan; now it was the only bit of sovereignty that remained to her, yet she succeeded in doing it honour. When six years later the Duke of Ferrara, Alphonso d'Este, Beatrice's brother, passing through Bari, went to pay her a visit, he was struck by the wonderful welcome he received and by the remains of magnificence that he found at the palace of the unfortunate Isabella, just as though she were still Duchess of Milan.

The years rolled on, and events passed even more swiftly. In her solitude beside the Adriatic, still threatened occasionally by the after-effects of foreign invasion, Isabella was to learn that she had not yet exhausted the whole gamut of human agonies. Her daughter, the little Hippolita, died in her arms. She had still a remnant of hope in her son's destiny. From time to time a courier arriving from France brought her news of the "Abbé of Noirmoutiers" (thus the *duchetto* was now styled). Then one day came the tidings that he had broken his neck out hunting. . . . All was henceforth finished for her.

Certainly destiny had avenged her on her enemies. She managed to survive all the disasters

that had overtaken them ; she knew the martyrdom that Ludovic the Moor was undergoing in his cell at Loches, and how, before his wretched death in captivity, his friends had feared for his reason. It is said that vengeance is a pleasure belonging to the gods ; but those gods are satisfied with little, and that little was not sufficient for the heart of a mother deprived of her child. . . .

Something more was needed. Deprived of her son and of one of her two daughters, Isabella placed all her hopes on Bona. One might possibly imagine her eyes lowered—as in the portrait—in her past, in her mourning ; they were still wide open—just as they are on the margin of the drawing where Boltraffio depicted her. They were still fixed on Milan. With the tenaciousness of an insect that resumes its route though intercepted a thousand times, without the variation of a hair's breadth, as soon as the obstacle is removed, the poor woman still endeavoured to make of her daughter, the last survivor of her children, what she had not succeeded in being herself—a real Duchess of Milan. Therein she very nearly succeeded. It was in 1512, and once more the French had been driven out of Italy. Massimiliano, son of Ludovic the Moor, that little heir who had been made so much of by the poets and painters of the Sforzas, returned from Germany and succeeded his father. There was an idea of offering to betroth him to his cousin Bona, who had been born in the same week as him, and in the same Castello. He seemed agreeable to this arrangement. Isabellas' dream, her only one, that

was easily recognizable under its various forms, seemed likely to be accomplished at last, when Massimiliano was himself overthrown after reigning only three years. The French victory over his troops at Marignano, decided his fate. He made no complaint and appeared quite happy at the prospect of going to live in royal state in France as his cousin Francesco, the Abbé of Noirmoutiers, had lived in the good graces of Francis I. In his stead, Bona married Sigismond I, King of Poland, and it was over a country of snows and " barbarians " that the last of the Sforzas reigned.

Such is the true history of *Ysabella de Aragonia Sforcia unica in discrazia.* Now, has she any real right to such a title? Everyone will decide that, according to his respective experience and heart, by utilizing reasons more human but not more uncertain than the reasons alleged in the ordinary way, to judge of the authenticity of her portrait.

THIRD PART

BIANCA SFORZA DE SAN SEVERINO

BIANCA SFORZA DE SAN SEVERINO.
Ambrosian Library, Milan.

To face p. 159.

BIANCA SFORZA DE SAN SEVERINO.

ALL MILAN is full of her. Her portrait can be seen in shop fronts and windows, on easels, reproduced by every process and on all kinds of materials, on all those thousands of useless articles termed "souvenirs," and on that fiduciary coinage representing treasures of concealed art—picture postcards. Everyone knows that narrow girl's head, almost that of a child still, covered with thick hair that falls on the cheeks like the ears of a spaniel, and then is raised at the nape to show a long pale and slim neck like the stem of a lily; that forehead bound in a golden fillet, from which are suspended equidistant from each other—like electric bulbs arranged around the dome of a cathedral for nocturnal illumination—big pearls; on the hair a square-meshed net, bordered with an edging of smaller pearls, and on the shoulder, a square diamond to which is attached a square ruby with a big transparent pearl dependent from it, drawn-out and pear-shaped like a drop of water about to fall.

Everyone must have asked at some time whose profile that is, and towards what it is turned; what brilliant happy days, or else what tears are presaged by those rows of pearls. . . . One name

at most—a pretty name—is whispered by the knowledgable ones, with all sorts of doubting expressions : Bianca Sforza. . . . Another name, that of the painter, is put forward with more assurance : Ambrogio de Predis, who for some years had been successor to Leonardo da Vinci. But one must judge of that oneself. A portrait of which one has seen many reproductions, both faithful or unfaithful, is like a person of whom one has heard a great deal of talk. One wants to see the original, to free oneself from uncertainty and from the obsession of the tellers or the copies.

Now, the original [1] is hidden away in a tiny little gallery, that is itself concealed in a library, tucked away in its turn behind the brutal magnificence of the new Post Office at Milan, in the centre of the town ; the Ambrosian. The tourist coming to Italy, whom more enchanting towns call from a greater distance, scarcely realizes that here he can breathe on the plant itself, the extremely penetrating perfume of a far-off past, nor that in this ultra-modern city throbbing with machinery, he will be able to indulge in an orgy of meditation !

[1] Portrait of Bianca Giovanna Sforza, natural daughter of Ludovic the Moor, and wife of Galeazzo de San Severino.

Presumed with verisimilitude : the profile portrait of the young woman with the pearls, 29 × 14 inches, bearing the number 8 and entitled *Rittrato di Donna*, for a long time called *Beatrice d'Este* ; formerly attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, but now to Ambrogio de Predis, in the Ambrosian Gallery, Milan.

References : Alessandro Giulini : *Bianca Sanseverino Sforza ; Lombard Historical Archives XXXV.* Bellincioni : *Rime.* Francesco Malaguzzi Valeri : *The Court of Ludovic the Moor*, I *Private Life*, and II *The Lombard Artists.* Carlo Magenta : *Viscontis and Sforzas of the Castello of Pavia.* Calco Tristano : *Nuptiæ mediol. et esten. Principum.*

More often he treats this library with disdain, and thus passes by one of the most radiant and ephemeral destinies that ever charmed man, in the time of the fair Simonetta and Giovanna Tornabuoni.

Let us not do the same as he, but let us enter that deserted stronghold. Quite close to a window, in a small silent room, this is what meets our eyes : three easels. On the first is placed a *Saint John the Baptist*, by Bernardino Luini ; on the second, an *Infant Saviour*, by the same Luini ; on the third, lighted from left to right by the first light that filters into the room, is the celebrated portrait that can be seen everywhere. On an olive background, the splendid head covered with hair as radiant as flames, the temples covered with bands more ample still than those bands known as " Botticelli," a few strands of hair detached from the rest hang like threads, sweep down the cheeks lower than the chin, lower than the throat, until they almost touch the pearls of the collar. A surcoat of dark chestnut over a crimson bodice gives an impression of blackness. The colouring of the face is white, with here and there black shading at the join of the lips, on the upper eyelid, above the nostril and the ridge of the nose. All this and the moist brilliance of the eyes impart to this face something of the freshness of those English portraits of the eighteenth century.

The first thing that strikes one is its extreme youthfulness and its extreme seriousness. Certainly, a profile is usually a serious thing. There

are full-face portraits which smile at us and freshen us; but a profile seems to be looking into the future. In this case, the look, still childish and shy, adds to the natural gravity of the profile. This accounts for a great deal of the extraordinary attraction which this delicate face possesses. Bembo, who doubtless was acquainted with the model, thus defines feminine perfection in his *Treatise on Love*, and one might almost imagine that he wrote it before this portrait, without taking his eyes off it for an instant:—

> Beautiful hair, more resembling brown gold than anything else, that was evenly divided on the top of the head by a straight line, and intending to fall down over the shoulders to the feet is caught up in several lovely folds. Then, down from the temples alongside the cheeks, fine strands of hair wave gently in the air and hang like graceful little tufts, in such a way that it seems as though it might be a fresh miracle of a wave moving over a mass of fresh white snow. . . . A fair forehead that by its pretty shape shows that it is the abode of firm and wise purity. Then we come down to the brows of fine ebony, smooth and calm, below which can be seen two splendid and full black eyes showing honest seriousness, together with natural sweetness, shining like two stars in their courses. Two round and delicate cheeks of a whiteness comparable only to that of milk, except where they rival the scarlet freshness of roses that bloom in the dawning. . . . The tiny mouth occupies very little space and is bordered with two ruby lips of as wonderful lustre as one can desire, and which have the power to kindle in any man, no matter how cold or careless he may be, a great longing to kiss them. . . .

The second thing that is characteristic of this portrait is the jewels. They are so numerous and so tightly packed together, and follow the lines and contours so faithfully that were all the rest of the drawing, figure, bust and colouring to dis-

appear, they would suffice for one to be able to re-establish with certainty the general outlines.

On seeing them, one realizes what sort of place precious stones then occupied in the daily life: rubies, *balass* rubies, emeralds, *tavola* diamonds—that is to say, flat or pointed—gems of every description and colour. To us, they are mere accents of decoration, that are often sacrificed for enamels in modern jewellery and easily imitated; but to the people of the Renaissance, jewels were quite a different proposition. Besides the fact that physicians and soothsayers treated them as charms against poison, fever, inconstancy, madness, or the King's Evil, princes used to store them up as their war chest. The coffer of a duchess might represent a whole army of Swiss mercenaries. Names were given to every jewel just as to the stars. Everyone knew their value, almost to a ducat. They were lent by one Court to another, for a night's entertainment, and at festivities, all eyes were fixed on them. Their appearance or disappearance from a toilette was followed with curiosity, for it was no rare thing for them to be put in pawn, and thus the ups and downs of their owners' fortunes could be guessed at. Arranged in long lines on dresses or as notes of music they whispered symbolic airs. Grouped in fresh constellations, they were a means of announcing new alliances between peoples or rulers; and while astrologers sought futures from the stars, diplomats drew horoscopes with more accuracy and more assurance from these little drawing-room stars, less high up but more sure.

Hence it may be guessed with what devotion women hung them on their persons—not hidden away in the folds of their hair or their laces, but detached and exposed, one by one, as on a living shrine. With what respect and attention painters had to detail them, and if it were pearls that had to be represented, what spells they must have had to cast over them! Here, each is depicted as though it were a little world all to itself, not only with its east, but with its west and its poles, with its ring of subjacent light between its region of internal shadow and its shadow thrown on the flesh. A very strange point is that the pearls of this portrait are transparent, either because they were so in effect—that is to say, that they were only *jocalia de cristallo*—or rather because the painter did not depict the real pearls belonging to the Princess, but had glass imitations made of them, in order to have more time to study them. Excess of conscience may have produced this error.

Such conscientiousness can be seen everywhere. The diamond is cut with the respect due to a stone, "which gives strength and courage, wards off incubi and succubi, and protects from poison"; the ruby, "which cleanses the mind, drives away evil thoughts and makes men amiable"; and then pearls, "which calm fears and frights and anguish caused by the spleen," which adorn youth, that would give these jewels all these virtues even if they did not possess them before, are set or strung and lighted and cared for with the piety and devotion to be found in a convent for the sacred lamps.

In this respect we have lost the sense of the mysterious, all that the imagination of our ancestors reposed of hope, fear and enquiry in these little spheres of price, brilliant and capable of controlling sickness or even death, on women's foreheads. Especially have we lost the joys of surprise. It is not certain that the artist believed in all the magical virtues of the jewels he set himself out to paint, but he surely was not blasé about their beauty. He still felt in all its freshness the wonder of gazing at them, the pride in reproducing them and in shewing them to whomsoever had not yet set eyes on them. Thus, into the meticulous, ingenuous and impassioned copy that he made of them, he put the zest of the teller who relates a story for the first time.

And now, who is this woman, universally known as regards her features and her adornment, and pretty well universally unknown as regards her life? She is an ephemera, even more than Beatrice d'Este. She is a little girl, who plays at being a grown-up lady, and even at being a very great lady; a living doll who is clothed, bedecked, and whose hair is dressed with all the jewels in that Court so rich in jewellery, on whom all the latest fashions are tried, in that palace most curious for fresh fashions; who is married in her eighth year to the most admired cavalier in France and Italy, and who does not walk at his side on her wedding day, before all the jealous ladies, who cannot feel jealousy for a child; a *Madonna*, who learns to sign her name laboriously, doubtless putting out her tongue in her earnestness, and who

then goes off in great state to receive the King of France, or the Ambassadors of Venice; a little fairy who dances and springs about, hunts the hart and the stag, and who, finding one fine day a doll smaller than herself, a new-born prince,[1] plays at being mother to him; and who then one evening grows pale, takes to her bed, and dies—from which fact we may know that she was not really a doll and that a little heart ceased to beat—at an age when other hearts are about to wake up. Such is the little lady who appears, disappears, plays at hide and seek with historians, through letters, songs, verses, hunting parties, and the diplomatic balls of the court of Milan, between the years 1489 and 1496—Bianca Giovanna Sforza, the natural and favourite child of Ludovic the Moor, and the wife of Galeazzo de San Severino.[2]

[1] The little Francesco, second son of Beatrice d'Este, born February 4th, 1495.

[2] There is no knowledge of reliable source, it is true, as to who the young woman of the portrait actually is. In the deed of gift that transferred this picture in 1618, from Cardinal Borromeo's collection to the Ambrosian Library, it is spoken of as "a portrait of a Duchess of Milan," nothing more. On one occasion it was believed that this likeness was identical with one to be seen in the house of Thaddeus Contarini at Venice in 1525, and which is described by Mark Anthony Michieli as a "profile portrait of the head and bust of the Lady-daughter of the Lord Ludovic of Milan, married to the Emperor Maximilian"—which would make the portrait out to be either that of Bianca Giovanna Sforza, daughter of Ludovic the Moor indeed, but not the wife of the Emperor Maximilian, or that of Bianca Maria Sforza, married, indeed, to the Emperor Maximilian, but the niece and not the daughter of Ludovic the Moor. So much for the evidence of text.

But it is sufficient to look at the portrait to be assured of three things: that it is that of a very young person, as shown by the neck, the throat, and the whole expression; and that it is that of an already-married woman, as is attested by the profusion of jewellery that covers her (it is known

This Bianca Giovanna Sforza, who should not be confused, but who always is confused with her cousin, Bianca Maria Sforza, the wife of the Emperor Maximilian, was the daughter of the Moor. Strange to say, she did not resemble him, whereas on the other hand Bianca Maria, who was only

that at that time portraits of young girls depict no jewellery); then, this woman lived exactly during the reign of Ludovic the Moor, as evidenced by the style of hair-dressing, the embroidery of little golden chains, the *fantasia dei Vinci* around the top of the sleeve, and the arrangement of the three jewels—diamond, rubies and pearls—placed on the shoulder; finally, the words mentioned, "a Duchess of Milan," although perhaps literally erroneous, show that tradition recognized that this portrait was of a person of very high rank, which would be the standing of the Duchesses of Milan. Now, all this restricts the field of theories. A compeer of the Duchess of Milan, already married at the age such a profile leads one to suppose, and during the reign of Ludovic the Moor, might be Beatrice d'Este. And in effect, that is the name that was for a long time attributed to this portrait. However, the profile of Beatrice d'Este is well known to us. It is attested by eight or ten perfectly similar profiles that can almost be superposed one on the other, due to different masters, who were contemporaneous with the model, but who did not copy each other's work: the sculptor Cristoforo Romano, the sculptor Cristoforo Solari—known as the *Gobbo*—the painter Zenale, and the artist of the portrait preserved in the Pitti Palace (Lorenzo Costa or Ambrogio de Predis). Now, none of these profiles, which are all alike, has the slightest resemblance in the world to the one in question. Can we assume the theory that the author of this portrait, should have missed the likeness to such an extent? Is it at all within the region of possibility? The sum total of the resemblance, in the usual acceptance of the term—that is to say, the play of physiognomy or expression—is quite possible, and may be seen every day; but here it is not a question of that. We are concerned with the very construction of the face, the shape of the skull, the facial angle, the turn of the lips, and particularly with the volume of the cheeks and the chin. This profile is, moreover, an admirable drawing, and the man who drew it was a keen student of nature. If one takes into consideration a number of examples of great artists who have lost the facial resemblance, one will not find a single case of a great artist modifying the actual construction of a face, with the possible exception of Titian, who cannot be quoted in such reference, for he used to paint a portrait without having set eyes on the model. Therefore, any attempt

his niece, did—hence a number of errors very favourable for discussions. She was born in 1482 at Milan, of a woman of small account, one Bernardina de Corradis, whom history has treated with contempt.

Her father had given her her name, her castle

to reconcile this likeness with all the others we possess of Beatrice d'Este is vain.

Beatrice d'Este being ruled out, there only remains in the Court of Milan at her time one woman who was at once as young as her, already married, and so highly placed that she might have left the impression of being a Duchess of Milan; and that is Bianca Giovanna Sforza, the natural daughter of Ludovic the Moor, born in 1482, and wife of Galeazzo de San Severino. All the evidence at our disposal points to her ranking pretty nearly as high as the Duchesses of Milan, and gives her husband as possessing such a train at the Court, that it might have been supposed that he was himself the Duke. It is true that she died very young, in her fifteenth year, and historians assert that that fact suffices to disqualify her from identification with this portrait; but it is not sufficient. In southern countries, there are faces as firmly moulded as that, at fourteen, and it must be believed that Bianca Sforza, who was already married at the age of fourteen, to Galeazzo de San Severino, was particularly precocious, to have, before her death, been able to play the rôle which the same historians attribute to her. What is more, the artist, having to paint this child who played the great lady with the complicity and to the applause of the whole Court, and under the charmed gaze of the Moor and the King of France, was well able to accentuate the dawning characteristics of the face, instead of softening them as is usually done, and ageing his model a little, to flatter her. Historians object that this pretended daughter of Ludovic the Moor bears no resemblance to her father. That is true, but then the portraits of many women would be misnamed—some of the most authentic amongst them—if it were essential that they should resemble their father to use his name. Bianca Maria Sforza, the wife of the Emperor Maximilian, was only the Moor's niece, but was very like him in features; it may well be that his own daughter bore no resemblance to him but rather reproduced her mother's traits, that Bernardina de Corradis who was so fair—wherein she would have proved her sense—and historians would do well to copy her. It is not therefore decided positively that the portrait in the Ambrosian is infallibly that of Bianca Sforza, but no other woman has better claim, nor even so good a one as her. That is why we are retaining her name.

at Voghera, the Terzigo Palace, a great deal of money and, as Bellincioni aptly remarked, her "wittiness." Her mother, possessing nothing, had bestowed nothing on her but her beauty ; except, maybe, her gracefulness, for little Bianca was *allegra e di bona voglia*, a chronicler writes. Everybody loved her. In the series of tapestries that draped the choir of the Cathedral at Rheims, woven in the early days of the sixteenth century, there is a little figure capped and dressed exactly like a Princess of the Court of Ludovic the Moor. She appears at every moment in the scenes of the *Vie et Mort de la Vierge*, without any apparent reason, without other pretext than her amiable face that one is always pleased to see again. Thus did little Bianca appear in every scene at the Sforza Court.

She was at every fête, especially after her marriage, which was celebrated with great pomp on January 10th, 1490. She was to be seen at Beatrice d'Este's entry to Milan, taking precedence immediately after the two duchesses, and the love of her father's young wife was hers from that moment and was never lost to her. She was to be seen at those country parties where the princesses relaxed the ducal etiquette, and eye-witnesses noticed that she was dressed and decorated like the two duchesses, "without any difference." "On May 9th, 1493," says a chronicler, "she arrives at the Castello at Pavia, and starts out the very same day with Isabella of Aragon and their respective ladies, to inaugurate the country pleasures of the year.

They all go off to a neighbouring field to indulge in the frenzied amusement of throwing hay at each other ; after which the young Duke of Milan takes the Duchess on the pillion behind him, and everyone returns to the Court tired out from these innocent pleasures." She was to be seen, on the arrival of the King of France, at Annone in September 1494, still following immediately after Beatrice, and all the more in evidence since it was her husband who had swept away the final hesitation of Charles VIII about coming to Italy. She was to be seen at the wedding of the Emperor Maximilian to the youthful Bianca Maria Sforza, sitting in one of those decorated chariots used in the procession, and simply smothered in pearls. She occasionally even took part at diplomatic receptions. In 1496, when Venice sent two Ambassadors, Antonio Grimoni and Marco Morosini to Milan, to meet Maximilian who was then at Vigevano, these were lodged in little Bianca's own palace and there, in the absence of her husband, who was suffering from an attack of fever, she welcomed these grave personages. She was then scarcely fourteen. Such was the initiative or assurance of little Princesses before there was any thought of instructing them.

Must one be forced to believe in Gloucester's words, that short summers follow over-precocious springs ? It was so short a time after these solemnities, on November 23rd of the same year, that Bianca died suddenly of a *passione de stomacho*, as the men of art put it. It was the first toll of the

fatal bell that heralded the end of a world. Beatrice's grief was deep. "Although you have already heard from the Duke, my husband, of the premature death of Madonna Bianca, his daughter and the wife of Galeazzo," she wrote to Isabella d'Este, "I can do no less than write you these few lines by my own hand, to tell you what great sorrow and anguish this death has brought me. Her loss is indeed greater than words can tell, on account of our great intimacy and the place she held in my affections. May God have her soul in His keeping!" On his side, the Moor, whom this blow struck "right in the heart," poured out his grief, not to a relative, but to the mother of the dead girl, Bernardina de Corradis, and protested to her "that she would be no less beloved of him in the future than if Bianca had been still alive."

He had also a thought to bestow comforting his son-in-law, Galeazzo, who was ill himself and in an almost dangerous state at the time of the catastrophe. Not being able to go to Milan himself, he dispatched three great men with whom he was on terms of intimacy, to be with him in his mourning and assure him of his inviolable attachment. They found Galeazzo prostrate, having lost all desire to move or live, and it was only after great difficulty that they persuaded him to quit the retreat in the Castello, where he had shut himself up, and go and convalesce in the country at Abbiategrasso.

The grief of the young widower inspired the poets, and Niccolo da Correggio celebrated it in a sonnet that is still in existence. Everywhere

was stupefaction at this calamity and outbursts of sobbing. Bianca Maria Sforza, the young Empress of Germany, writing from Worms to her uncle Ludovic the Moor, made appeal to his strength of mind to surmount the grief that this loss had plunged him into. It seemed as though some light that dazzled the eyes of that Court and hid from them the ugly side of life, had just gone out; and once the faint gleam vanished, things suddenly appeared in their true semblance, not only the reverse of beautiful, but also menacing. Thus maybe we ourselves will feel when we leave the Ambrosian Library and find ourselves flung back once more into the stream of daily life, where that profile will be no more seen. In any case, it would be difficult to find in history a child of that age holding so great a place in so many hearts, in the midst of such keen imaginations and senses, at a time so ripe for the enchantment of humanity. The splendid and brief apparition of Simonetta at Florence is the sole rival that can be compared with her. In features, there is not a great deal of resemblance between them, yet there are certain points wherein they are alike; a face like that, turned towards such a short but brilliant life with that fervour at once characteristically confiding and childish, as though towards an unlimited horizon, is only to be found in the profile attributed to Pollajuolo.[1]

All the horror that death evoked did not arise out of its suddenness alone, but out of the mystery

[1] See Masks and Faces at Florence and the Louvre.—The Fair Simonetta.

of its circumstances. So premature an end and one so contrary to the general idea of the laws of Nature never appears to be "natural." Willingly one suspects some wonderful and criminal reason for it, especially when it is a question of one of the "great ones of the earth." There was no lack of murmurings and whisperings of poison, on this as on other occasions; and rumour was perhaps assisted by the fact that the Moor ordered his trusted friend, Ambrogio da Rosate to hold an inquest on the reasons for the illness and the remedies prescribed. This inquest revealed nothing, except the inadequacies of the doctors in attendance who "neither saw nor understood the evil," according to the Duke's own expression. Any theory of a crime in this case is, moreover, absurd, for one would find it difficult to imagine either the motive or the instrument; and it is quite improbable that either the father or the husband of the victim knew of it, and if they had done so, that they would not avenge it. One possible theory alone would allow of the reconciliation of all these contradictions; that one where the poisoning would have had Beatrice d'Este as its instigator, who might have been poisoned in her turn a month and a half later by Galeazzo, to avenge Bianca. However, there is absolutely no authority for so extravagant a supposition. A playwright, in search of complicated vendettas amidst the sumptuous episodes of the Renaissance, might find therein as rich material doubtless as in the affairs of the Borgias, but the historian cannot

avail himself of the licence permitted to the playwright. Bianca Sforza, worn out by a life that frequently overcame her elders who were in the prime of life, really died from overdoing that rôle of great lady that she was encouraged to play at too tender an age.

As for her husband, at the time of her death, he was at the beginning of a long career that was to make him famous and merit for him mention in the *Cortegiano*, as one of the most accomplished gentlemen of his time. This Galeazzo, cousin to the Moor, was the most brilliant of the twelve San Severino brothers, giants amongst whom History has preserved the names of Gaspare, the famous Captain Fracasse, Gian Francesco, Count of Caiazzo, who commanded the Sforza troops at Fornua, and Cardinal Federigo, who was so strong that he was easily able to carry in his arms the ponderous Pope Alexander VI.

Galeazzo made his name first at tournaments as the most redoubtable of jousters. At the *Giostra*, on September 23rd and 24th, 1489, at Pavia, he had broken nineteen lances, and then thrown his adversary off his horse, amidst the acclamations of a whole people. The same success was ever his in every country he visited, but passages of arms were not his only accomplishment. In this respect, he in no way resembled his brother Fracasse, whom Catherine Sforza advised that he should grease himself all over like a suit of armour and shut himself away in a cupboard in peacetime, being, like armour, of no possible use except in time of

war. Galeazzo, on the contrary, was distinguished for his wit, his charm, his exquisite politeness and his literary skill, and was as capable of making a reply to Leonardo da Vinci as of crossing swords with Pietro Monte. It was these qualities in the first place, that won him the heart of Ludovic the Moor, causing him to become his son-in-law and later commander-in-chief of his army.

He also shewed diplomatic aptitude, and when it was necessary to send an Ambassador to Lyons, to persuade Charles VIII to cross the Alps, the Moor had no hesitation in choosing Galeazzo. After the professional diplomats, who had only succeeded in tying the Gordian knots of intrigue, he desired that a sort of archangel should come on the scene, who should have the power and ability to sway the hesitaters, put traitors to rout, and dazzle the King. Handsome, young, elegant, with a golden tongue and invincible arm, the husband of Bianca Sforza seemed above all others the very person for this appointment, and indeed he surpassed himself in it. Before the day fixed for him by protocol to make his state entry, he slipped into Lyons in disguise in order to profit by a happy conjunction of the stars, saw Charles VIII and pleased him at once.

Things were still better the following day, when he appeared in the midst of the princes and gentlemen of the King's guard, his hands loaded with presents ; perfumes for the King, Spanish dresses for the Queen. A long line of chargers and jennets followed him, to fill the stables of the Court, and

when he was seen to enter the lists and tilt with the lance, enthusiasm knew no bounds, and there was nothing else talked of by the gossips in the French camp. Ambassadors lost no time in relating the marked favour shown to the new arrival. Belgiojoso, the Moor's envoy, wrote to him: "His Most Christian Majesty, having retired into his own quarters with a few of his intimate friends and several of his mistresses, caused the said Lord Galeazzo to be introduced. After a little agreeable conversation, he took one of these damsels by the hand, saying that he would like to give her to him as his mistress, then he chose one of them for himself, and each of them remained talking to his companion for a couple of hours." At this news, the father-in-law could not conceal his delight. "According to what we learn from many letters, and in particular from yours of the 24th," he replied to Belgiojoso, "the great honours which His Most Christian Majesty does every day to Messer Galeazzo, our son-in-law and son, such as introducing him into his apartments and associating with him in his domestic pleasures, although they do not exceed our expectation, are no less of a nature to cause us the liveliest satisfaction and arouse in us infinite gratitude."

Unfortunately, when it came to leading armies, the tactician in him was not the equal of the courtier or the diplomat, and he was, despite prodigies of valour, outrageously beaten by his rival, Trivulce. He was destined, it is true, to later meet him again in the company of the King of France, and beat

him on the more favourable battleground of Court intrigues, but that tardy revenge did not retrieve his reputation with those grave arbiters who shape posthumous opinion. It remains a fact that the handsomest, the most seductive and the bravest of the San Severino brothers, ever victorious in the lists, met only defeat in open battles—until the day when he saved the honour of the French Armies in another defeat, but a glorious one, at Pavia. Thus, in spite of the great military commands he held, throughout almost all his career, if one wants to see him as he was, the husband of little Bianca, one must imagine him as a serving cavalier, or rather one has only to consider the portrait he draws of himself in the following letter written to Isabella d'Este, on February 19th, 1491 :

This morning I started out on horseback with the Duchess and all her ladies for Cussago, and in order that Your Highness may be fully understanding of our amusements, I will tell you that I was required to ride in a carriage with the Duchess and Dioda, and as we rolled along we sang more than twenty-five songs arranged for three voices. That is to say, that Dioda took the tenor part and the Duchess the soprano, whilst I sometimes sang bass and sometimes soprano, and played so many tricks that I really think I was more foolish than Dioda ! And now goodbye for this evening. I am going to try to do better still, in order to offer Your Highness the most amusement possible when you come here in summer

* * * * *

Once arrived at Cussago, we made a great expedition to the river, where we caught an immense quantity of big pike, trout, lamprey, shrimps, and several nice kinds of smaller fish, and set about eating these until we were no more hungry. Then, to

digest our dinner, we immediately began to play at ball with great ardour, and after playing for some time we climbed up to the Palace, which is really very fine and amongst other things contains a marble door with carving on it, quite as beautiful as the new work being carried out at the Chartreuse. Then we set about examining the results of our fishing that had been left exposed on the top of the place and carried away as many lamprey and shrimps as we could eat, and also sent some lamprey to His Highness the Duke. When this was done, we proceeded to another place and caught more than a thousand big trout, and after picking out the finest as presents and for our own illustrious mouths, we had the rest thrown back into the river.

Then, we got on our horses again and rode alongside the river to fly some of my excellent falcons that you saw at Pavia, and they killed several birds. It being then about four o'clock, we started out to hunt some stags and fawns, and after giving chase to twenty-two and killing two stags and two fawns, we returned home, reaching Milan an hour after sundown and presented the results of our expedition to His Highness the Duke of Bari. My illustrious Lord took great pleasure in hearing of all we had done—far more, indeed, than if he had been present in person ; and I think that my Lady the Duchess will end by making great profit out of all this, for the Lord Ludovic will make her a present of Cussago, which is a place of rare beauty and great value. However, as for me, I spoilt my boots, tore all my clothes, and to cap everything, played the fool ; such are the rewards one receives in the service of the ladies. Still, I shall be patient, because it is for the service of my Duchess, whom I shall never desert either in life or death. There was only one thing lacking from our pleasure, and that was your amiable presence, my fair Lady.

What was the physical likeness of this mirror of courtesy ? It was at one time thought to be known, and was even the occasion for a singular archæological adventure. Erudites have their own pastimes that are unknown to the vulgar herd. They arrange marriages between the portraits confided to their charge as soon as they see what our fathers used to call "suitable matches." They asked

themselves where they might find a portrait husband for Bianca, and it seemed to them that in the same Room E of the Ambrosian, was a young man with handsome leonine eyes, with a strong shaven chin, capped with a round red bonnet of the shape of an acorn cup, who would be a very suitable partner for her. They had therefore decided that this was Galeazzo de San Severino. However, one day, unfortunately for so fine a scheme, it was suggested that the picture should be washed. . . . This risky and useless operation revealed to everyone something that they had never even suspected, which was that the young man had a hand, that that hand held a paper, and that on that paper were traced notes of music. The commander of an army had fallen to the position of the leader of a chapel. It is believed that the portrait represents a certain Franchino Gaffurio. The mistaking of the mask of a musician for that of a soldier should neither scandalize us nor surprise us. It can thus well be seen that the archæologists of the future may mistake a portrait of Reyer for that of General de Gallifet. Still, it was a terrible shock. Out of so many great deeds of arms and heroic gestures attributed to the nice young man in the red cap, there only remained his piece of music, and the fair Bianca herself was beholden to him. . . .

We must therefore give up the idea of studying his features. As for his history, it is written in flowered letters and arabesques of gold, just as it is in the *Très Riches Heures*, on the margin of the most famous chronicles of France and Italy, for

the favour of the greatest princes was with him from the day of his birth until his death. That of Ludovic the Moor was carried to extremes and made of him almost the equal of a Duke of Milan. "No secret is unknown to him," the Papal Nuncio wrote of him to the Pope Innocent VIII. So much for Politics. As for honours, he held almost a Court of his own in the Castello, with a complete personnel and even a stable with his own horses. "It seems to me," wrote the Ambassador of Ferrara, "that Messer Galeazzo is Duke of Milan, for he does all he likes and gets everything he desires and asks for."

The same diplomat, rendering account of the smallest details of the sumptuous life led at the Castello, wrote on another day: "I would like Your Excellency to know that the Lord Ludovic is having three *zornee* (small gathered cloaks with open sleeves, and held at the back with a girdle) made in great secrecy. These three *zornee* are of crimson satin edged with very fine pearls; one for the Duke (Gian Galeazzo), the second for himself (the Moor), and the third for Messer Galeazzo de San Severino, all constructed after the same design, which is that of a clock that rings the hours with bells, except that in the case of the Lord Ludovic there are no bells, because he does not want his own to ring. On each *zornea* there is a verse of two lines, as you will see on the attached note, that will indicate the cloak intended for each one. The *zornee* with their embroideries, are being made secretly in His Lordship's apartments." At

every instant and in the smallest matters can thus be noticed the care shown by Ludovic the Moor to treat Galeazzo as an equal. In this way did one old fox bind the lion with chains.

It seemed that the fall of the one must drag down the other, and that the Duke, having lost his fortune, throne and liberty, without having been able to complete any of his enterprises, as Leonardo da Vinci melancholically remarks, would have also brought the career of Galeazzo to a close, but such was not the case. This spoilt child of Fate was destined to grow greater each time that one of his supports gave way, and that without even a reproach of excessive recantations being levelled at him. He was for some time, on the contrary, a cause of admiration through his faithfulness to misfortune. Whilst a refugee at Innsbruck, at the Court of the Emperor Maximilian, like many of the other Sforza partisans, living in retreat and in mourning for their invaded country and their dethroned prince, he utilized every credit there remained to him at the Court of France to obtain the release of the unhappy Prisoner of of Loches. Though he always failed, he returned to the charge, and this lasted for four years, a very long time for political fidelity in the sixteenth century.

Seeing, finally, after desperate efforts, that the Moor's cause was irretrievably lost, he began to think of his own, of the castles and land that he had left behind in Lombardy, and of the 240,000 ducats that his wife had bequeathed him at her

death. In order to regain these, he made his peace with Louis XII, and as no one could ever refuse him anything, he recovered at a blow all that he had lost. He recovered still more. He was created Knight of the Order of Saint Michael and invested with the highest honours. When one reads, in Moreri, the list of the Great Knights of France, one is no little surprised to notice, after the name of Pierre d'Urfe and before that of Jacques de Genouillac, a foreigner invested with that distinction, so coveted by all Frenchmen. That foreigner, " Galeazzo de San Severino," is no other than the widower of little Bianca.

From that day in 1506, he followed the fortunes of the King of France. He found once more, first at the Court of Louis XII, and later at that of Francis I, all that had so charmed him at the Court of Ludovic the Moor ; friendship, courtesy, the liking for art and literature, with a greater efficiency in arms. For twenty years he took part in every festival and triumph, both on the nearer and further side of the Alps, and even in those which took place in his native country. He took part also in every battle and by the generously offered gift of his life, succeeded in retrieving somewhat the weaknesses he is remembered for. When it became necessary for him to repay the incredible advances Fortune had never ceased to make him all through his life, he was a splendid payer. On February 24th, 1525, he fell while covering with his body the King of France, just as had fallen Bonnivet, old Louis de la Trémouille, and so many

others, in one of the most bloody hecatombs that History has recorded. "I need nothing more. Leave me and go to the King's assistance!" were his last words. Then doubtless, he looked around him: he was in the park at Pavia. . . . Like the noble beasts he had so often hunted through those woods, he was coming back to die at the very spot whence he had started off on his wandering and glorious course through the world, near the chapel where thirty-six years before, he had married little Bianca. If it is true that dying people re-see, with kaleidoscopic rapidity, all the scenes of their life, and especially the radiant days of their youth, there can be no doubt but that the figures who then bent over the "happy warrior" to brighten his last minutes were those women whom we have just been remarking on here: Beatrice d'Este, Isabella of Aragon, and Bianca Sforza.

FOURTH PART

BIANCA MARIA SFORZA, EMPRESS OF GERMANY

AMBOGIO DE PREDIS : BIANCA MARIA SFORZA, EMPRESS OF GERMANY.
Arconati-Visconti Room, Louvre.

To face p. 187.

BIANCA MARIA SFORZA—FOREWORD

THIS IS A PORTRAIT that slipped into the Louvre, like a ghost, during the war. Surely we have already seen that young woman's profile somewhere, with its mat colouring, as clear cut as the edging of a light-shaded cloth laid against a dark background, and with its decoration of hanging pearls and precious stones, but where? Was it at some festivity or social gathering? We cannot remember exactly, but surely at some time we had already stopped in front of her and asked ourselves, "Who is it?" Then the turmoil of events and conversation had carried away both question and answer. Years had passed, a new generation appeared on the scene; other and countless faces had superimposed themselves in our memory over the ephemeral image of the pearl-decked profile. Finally had come the great catastrophe, numbing all curiosity that had not the country's safety as its object. And now, after a lapse of years and in the recently-opened gallery, the reappearance of this forgotten little mask revives in our mind the same desire for knowledge, and once again we put the question to ourselves: "Is there a soul behind that mask, and if so, what is it like?"

We are concerned with a portrait painted at the end of the fifteenth century, attributed by some

to Ambrogio de Predis, by others to Bernardino dei Conti, and representing Bianca Maria Sforza Visconti, wife of Maximilian I, the Emperor of Germany ; which portrait is now at the Louvre, in the room reserved for the Arconati Visconti Collection, adjoining the Thiers Room. From the æsthetic point of view, it is one of the finest pieces of that Collection, and one of the most suggestive from the historical.

It shews the left profile without any inflection whatsoever, which seems as though it were gazing at something attentively outside the frame ; just in the same way as the portraits of Beatrice d'Este at the *Pitti* or the *Brera*, of the other Bianca Sforza at the *Ambrosian*, and of most of the Milanese ladies of the period. The model has evidently had to do with the same dressmaker and has just left the hands of the same hairdresser, as can be easily verified without leaving the Louvre if reference is made to the bust of Beatrice d'Este and the picture of the *Belle Ferronière*. The hair on the figure is arranged like a cap exactly fitting the face, draping the temples, the ears and almost all the head, from the corner of the brows to the white neck which it leaves bare, and then—suddenly caught up—it is bound together and falls down the back in a long straight pigtail, the *cuazzone* of the Milanese.

The only remarkable feature of this method of dressing the hair is that it is curled and fringed along the edge, and the detached wisp of " hair floating gently in the air and hanging like graceful little tassels," according to Pietro Bembo in his

Asolani, is not wavy as is usually the case, but straight and rigid like an aigrette upside down. The forehead is bound with a black fillet formed of jade pearls which surrounds the head. This is the *lenza* of the Milanese, known to the mediæval French as a *ferronière*. On the temple, at the intersection of this fillet and the descending edge of the gilt hair net, is a cluster of jewels arranged in the usual échelon : at the top, a small precious stone, doubtless a diamond ; in the centre, a big red oblong and flat stone like a ruby, and at the bottom, a pendant pear-shaped pearl. . . . Other round pearls form a double collar, one part of which fits high on the neck and is attached to a stiff cord bearing a double cross ; whilst the other end hangs from the nape of the neck to the breast, and then vanishes behind the frame. Down the breast as well, there can be discerned a small golden chain, whence hang suspended three black pearls that seem to be trying to slip behind the golden medallion.

All the above ornaments are on the bare flesh, the bodice having an opening cut square to the shoulder, edged with broad gold lace or leaf embroidery. This toilette is exactly that of the Milanese of the " Golden Age "—the end of the fifteenth century. The *camora* is very low cut, both in front and at the back, of a greenish-blue colour and very probably of velvet. It can be clearly seen here that the sleeve is quite independent of the " body " and of a striking colour ; doubtless it was originally crimson, that little by little has

become a rosy orange. The middle of the sleeve, which is the lightest part of the picture, has been painted in lemon yellow by the artist to express the discoloration of local tone by the light. The sleeve is attached to the "body" by two bows of black silk with loose ends, but not without allowing puffs of yellowish white linen to shew through the slashings. The colour of all this is doubtless not the colour that the painter originally made use of, as was seen by his contemporaries. A spray of orange leaves, symbolical of marriage, and painted on the background, is scarcely to be seen. The greenish background having become distinctly darker, the light and pink flesh of the cheeks, the discolouring of the lips, and the long pale swan-like neck show up in vivid contrast, without any visible outside illumination, like a lighted lamp. The brown mass of hair contrasts perhaps too much with the net which is of the colour of ripe corn, and with the *cuazzone* of a dirty white and greenish colour that falls away into the shadow, whilst over all that dull blending, the red ruby plaque strikes a false note. Still, the sum total of fresh effects created by the mysterious evolutions of colours is not unpleasing to the eye.

Such as it is, this profile had already been on show at the École des Beaux-Arts on the other side of the River Seine, at the Exhibition of Portraits of Women and Children which was held in the Spring of 1897. It was during those days of light and tragedy that the smoke from the fire at the Charity Bazaar rose up into the calmness of a

pure blue sky. A few devotees of the past had halted before it ; but the noisy splendours of the English painters, Reynolds and Lawrence, that were on show at the same exhition, struck onlookers with the force of a thunderbolt and prevented attention from being rivetted on this comparatively flat, pale and dry painting. Visitors, dazzled by the curls of Lady Price and the bare, straight arm of Mistress Cuthbert, passed quickly by the modest profile traced by Ambrogio de Predis. It is not at all certain that Winterhalter himself, with his *Child and Big Dog*, had any greater effect on the crowd. . . . And so the portrait of Bianca Maria Sforza, withdrawn into the shadow of a private collection, remained enveloped in all the prestige of a mystery that has not been solved.

It is not the identity of the model, nor her official history, that is a mystery. That is attested by the most reliable of authorities. On a medal in the Imperial Museum at Vienna can be seen the superimposed profiles of the heads of the Emperor Maximilian and Bianca Maria Sforza, his wife, with this inscription : MAXIMILIANUS. RO. REX. ET. BLANCA. M. CONIGES. IV ; the facial angle of the woman being there sensibly the same as in our portrait. Her identity is corroborated by all the other effigies known to be of her : a drawing in the Venice Academy, where she is depicted, again in profile, on the same sheet as the Emperor Maximilian ; a restored portrait in the Gallery at Vienna, where can be seen what would be our Louvre portrait in a three-quarter position ; a pearl-

bedecked portrait in the Widener Collection, attributed to Ambrogio de Predis; and the three-quarter portrait in Germany, by Strigel, more imperial than ever and decorated like a shrine, become German by caprice; without mentioning her statue in bronze which still stands at Innsbruck.

Everywhere can be recognized the same sheep-like profile as on the picture before us. The testimony of contemporaries adds confirmation to this expression: "Of very sweet expression, slim of body, the face handsome and well shaped, very pleasant to look upon as regards all her other physical characteristics, and well proportioned, but thin," as the painter Lomazzo, who wrote in the sixteenth century, says when referring to her. Was she really pretty? That is to be doubted. It is true that carried away by his lyricism and anxious to repay in some measure the Moor's favours to him, the Tuscan poet Bellincioni, a guest of the Sforzas and but a poor illustrator of them, wrote of her:

> Bianca di perle, e bella piu ch'el sole
> Dell'ingegno del padre in se raccolse
> E la bellezza de la madre tolse
> Che'l volto ha di rubin, rose e viole.

Still, we are not forced to believe that. Our portrait in the Louvre does quite sufficient justice to her charms as attested by the evidence of Lomazzo. We are, therefore, without any possible doubt whatever, in the presence of Bianca Maria Sforza, daughter of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Duke of Milan, and of Bonne of Savoy, and become Empress of Germany by her marriage.

Chapter I

AT MILAN—THE PRINCESS

NOW, what sort of woman was she? Let us take a look at her. She is an exact reproduction of the "short triangular" type that the theorists of the planetary system place under the invocation of Venus and the Moon. Whatever be the name with which the fantasy of a conjectural science wills to endow her, she reproduces all its characteristics: a narrow mind, a very sensual nature, shy, soft and feckless, a bit of seaweed floating at the mercy of the waves in the troubled centre where she is obliged to live, good in so far as one can be good without understanding the misfortunes of others, devoted up to the point where devotion ceases to be mere condescension and becomes an effort, probably friendly and without haughtiness—such is the definition physiognomists would give of her at first glance.

Does her life belie such a diagnosis?[1] And

[1] On Bianca Maria Sforza, Empress of Germany, cf. Luzio and Renier: *Lombard Historical Archives*, vol. xvii., 1890. Felice Calvi: *Bianca Maria Sforza, Visconti, Queen of the Romans, Empress of Germany, and Ambassador of Ludovic the Moor at the Court of the Cæsars.* Eugenio Casanova: *The Offspring of Galeazzo Maria; Lombard Historical Archives*, 1899. Pelissier: *The Lady-friends of Ludovic the Moor and their rôles from* 1498 *to* 1499; *Historical Review*, 1892. Francesco

will she reveal a far more definite personality than does this portrait? To find that out, let us examine her life. Born in 1472 in the immense *Castello* of Milan, Bianca Maria was the daughter of Duke Galeazzo Maria Sforza, whose pointed nose, very like that of his brother, Ludovic the Moor, finely sculptured in a medallion, or *Tondo* of stone, can be seen close by in the Arconati Visconti Room, above the high buffet attributed to Hugues Sambin, with the inscription: G. M. S., F. D. M. QUINTUS; that is to say, Galeazzo Maria Sforza, Fifth Duke of Milan. His family was very numerous, and rarely was a small girl more generously provided with uncles and aunts. It would take ages to enumerate them all, her father possessing five legitimate brothers, amongst whom was the famous Ludovic the Moor, and several natural brothers, who were made into bishops or officers of the Papal Court. Then there were three legitimate sisters and a host of illegitimates, who sometimes took the veil. So that to this child, when the term "religious life" was used, it was almost always synonymous with bastardy.

With so many relatives, she could not lack playfellows, and besides, she had two legitimate brothers, Gian Galeazzo (the future Duke of Milan), and Ermes, and a little sister Anna, who was destined to precede Lucrezia Borgia as the wife of Alphonso

Malaguzzi Valeri: *The Court of Ludovic the Moor;* I, *Private Life.* R. de Maulde: *Review of Diplomatic History,* 1899. Gian Paolo Lomazzo: *Treatise on Paintings,* vol. vii, chap. xxv. Corio: *History of Milan.* Calco Tristano: *The Imperial Wedding.* Philippe de Commynes: *Memoirs.* Machiavelli: *Instructions Relating to Germany.*

d'Este. Moreover, she possessed many illegitimate sisters, amongst others the famous Catherine Sforza, the heroine of the family. The majority of these personages, big or little, dwelt in the Corte Ducale at the Castello, surrounded by a crowd of servants, guards and chamberlains, in a state of luxury then unparalleled in Europe. Those days of her early childhood were happy ones for her, beneath the lovely skies of Lombardy, but there were even then occasional thunderbolts.

Her first recollection—it was when she was four and a half—was tragic. It was the day after Christmas Day, in the year 1476, the feast of Saint Etienne. It was very cold that morning, deep snow lay in the streets, and ice made riding difficult. However, the noise made by a great crowd of horsemen was to be heard in the courtyards of the Castello, where her father was getting ready to go out, attended by a numerous suite of courtiers and Ambassadors, to hear Mass at San Stefano, as his custom was at that festival. Endeavours were made to dissuade him on account of the wretched state of the roads, and also, maybe, because some had presentiments of danger. Something terrible was brewing in the shadow. A few days before, as the Duke was making his way through Milan, three crows had obstinately hovered over his head, and no one had succeeded in driving them away. Then, a comet had appeared unexpectedly. The Duchess had just been dreaming about misfortunes. . . . What might all that presage? Nothing good, doubtless, but the Duke was

not alarmed. Prophecies and sinister warnings accompanied kings from the cradle to the grave, and they would never dare to take a single step if they put too much faith in dreams. . . . What danger could there be in going to hear Mass at San Stefano? For his part, Galeazzo Maria could see none. He was accustomed when he went out, to wear, concealed beneath his cloak, a cuirass or coat of mail. You will see the edge of this jutting out beyond the collar of his garment if you closely study his medallion in stone, which is in the same room as the portrait of Bianca at the Louvre. Now on that particular day, when this cuirass was held out for him to put it on, he refused it, not wishing, as he said, " to appear too fat." However, he had sent for his two little boys, Gian Galeazzo and Ermes, and had embraced them at some length, and had then started out for San Stefano.

Had little Bianca also been summoned to that farewell-taking? History makes no mention of it, but perhaps her father had not bothered about her. In any case, she was not destined to see him again, for at the moment of his entering the Church there was a stir in the overdense crowd, and before a single move could be made on the part of his attendants, the Duke fell bathed in his blood, whilst a Moorish soldier of his suite flung himself on one of the men who had dealt the blow, and strangled him without more ado. Whether it were a political conspiracy or personal vengeance, the murder brought no success to those who perpetrated it, but on the other hand the peace

of Lombardy—and even that of Europe—was for a long time compromised. Such was the prophecy of Pope Sixte IV when he learned of the catastrophe, and it was but too soon to be realized.

Another childhood's memory, which must have left a mark in Bianca's mind, was the arrival at the Palace of her uncle Ludovic the Moor, because that arrival, or rather return, had altered everything, faces and places, around her. One fine day in November 1480—she was then eight years old—she had been separated from her mother, and together with her brothers Gian Galeazzo and Ermes, been taken away from the Corte Ducale, where she had lived until then, to her uncle's dwelling in the Rocchetta. It was quite close, only a matter of a few steps, and inside the girdle of the same Castello, but it was in other apartments and amongst other faces that Ludovic Maria Sforza, Duke of Bari, the Moor, reigned as master. Her mother came to see her from time to time, but less and less frequently, and then finally came no more, for she had gone back to Savoy, her native country. The little girl thus beheld an unknown uncle drop from Heaven, and her mother go away to an outlandish country almost simultaneously. What might all that mean and what might it presage?

It was simply the last act of a tragic comedy, in which the Duchess Regent, Bonne, had lost her head, and where her Prime Minister had left his. Little Bianca had played no rôle in it, nor was her destiny to be in any way modified thereby.

If she indeed noticed anything, it was only in the changes wrought in her surroundings. This is what had happened. Her father, on his death, had left a great number of brothers, who were not in evidence at the Castello, after his tragic decease, because they were not in favour with the Prime Minister, the man who governed the State, in the name of the Duchess Regent and the young heir to the throne, Gian Galeazzo. Cico Simonetta, a political upstart and former retainer of the Sforzas, and, if a document of the *Missive ducali* is to be believed, something of a caricaturist, managed the affairs of State very well, but by keeping the whole Sforza family at a distance and by maintaining a firm hold on the Lombard Lords. He was thus bringing down on his own head the hatred of the great families of Milan : the Pusterlas, Landrianos, Borromeos and others. For a long time he was able to snap his fingers at them, and also at the brothers of the late Duke, even at the Duke of Bari (the Moor), because the Duchess Regent was completely under his influence.

But there came a day when that pious lady, foolish and elderly, and who " was of little sense," as Commynes puts it, took it into her head to fall in love " with a young man, a native of Ferrara, of no great lineage, who was in her suite." This was a mere valet de chambre of the late Duke, named Antonio Tassino. Very soon, there was nothing else talked of, in the Court and the city, but this passion of hers, and as it was a cause for laughter, old Simonetta ventured to remark on it

to his Sovereign and chided her for her lack of Ducal dignity. From that day, he was ruined, for a whole lifetime of work in the service of the Sforzas was of no weight when compared with the long curls and handsome eyes of the striking young squire. The Moor, who was prowling around his nephew's estates, learned of this, lost all shame, came to an understanding with the "master of the hour," and made his way secretly into Milan and then into the Castello, through a garden gate that was left open for him. He was inside the place and reconciled to his sister-in-law, before the all-powerful Minister got wind of it.

When Cico Simonetta learned of the adventure, there was nothing left for him to do but groan in dismay and foreboding. "Take care," said he to his Sovereign. "I shall lose my head, and you will lose your throne before very long!" Vain words for the ears of a widow in love. All that the handsome Tassino desired, she was unable to refrain from herself wishing, and besides, the Moor was a rough partner and played a very close game. In a very short time, he had Cico Simonetta arrested and exiled, and afterwards beheaded. Then Tassino, the squire, being of no further use to him, was sent back to Ferrara, whence he had come, in disgrace. Shortly afterwards he took away her children from the Duchess to keep them with him in the Rocchetta, the stronghold where he had established himself. As for her, deprived of her authority, deprived of her children, and finally deprived of her lover, she decided to return to

Savoy, but was arrested by order of her brother-in-law at Abbiategrasso and kept in a state of semi-captivity, whence she uttered loud cries, that were scarcely heard by the States of Europe and still less paid any heed to.

All the same, young Bianca was destined to see her mother again a few years later, and this was on the occasion of the marriage of her brother Gian Galeazzo, the young Duke of Milan, to his cousin Isabella of Aragon, daughter of the King of Naples—an event which took place in January 1489. She herself took part in this ceremony, being designated to receive her young sister-in-law at the entrance of the Castello and do her the honours of it, and the pomp displayed for the ceremony must have doubtless amused her as being a general anticipation of what would take place at her own wedding, of which there was ever a great deal of talk without realisation. It is not that she lacked suitors. At the age of two already, she was sought in marriage by Philibert the First, Duke of Savoy, who was seven years older than her. Bonne, the Duchess of Milan, promised 100,000 ducats as dowry when the young prince should marry her daughter ; that is to say, when he should be nineteen and Bianca twelve ; but the lad died on April 22nd, 1482, when she was only ten. She had to re-plan all her life. About two years after, there was talk of marrying her to the Duke Albert of Bavaria, called the Wise—one of those men wearing helmets and full armour, who stand with raised visor around the tomb of

Maximilian at Innsbruck—but that Albert the Wise was too clever in effect to marry that child.

She was later offered the Count of Humad, a natural son of Mathias Corvin, King of Hungary. She was then fifteen, and this time it was in earnest. She brought as her marriage portion 100,000 gold francs and 50,000 in precious stones—*in jocalibus* as memoirs of the times have it. In 1489, all was arranged. She was ready to start, in great state, to meet her future husband, attended by a suite of six hundred persons. Preparations were going forward to clothe all this party in "long garments," because the Hungarian folk loathed "the short clothes that are worn here," says a contemporary. There were there gentlemen, bishops, officers of the Papal Court and ladies, amongst others, *quattro matrone di gravita*, a procession to dazzle Europe and spread afar into "foreign" countries the renown of the Duke of Milan. All the same, no start was made. . . . Why did the scheme miscarry? The answer to that is not known. All we know is the claims of this royal maid grew greater each time a suitor vanished over the horizon. The Duke of Savoy dying, it was a future king that was in view, or a prince who was thought certain to come to the throne. The king failing her, it was an emperor. It was like a mountain excursion. Ever there were heights ahead, hidden by mountains that grew higher and higher.

In effect, far away beyond the ring of gnarled mountains that enclosed the world behind the fair and thoughtful heads of the ladies of Leonardo da

Vinci, beyond the calm and limpid lakes, where the S-shaped roads descend, enfolding with their windings the base of the blue pyramids, in the country of "*lanzknechts*" and "*reiters*," there lived a prince filled with colossal hopes—the hopes of Charlemagne—but suffering from an incurable malady, which his contemporaries on the further side of the Alps termed *mancamento del dinaro*, and what we on this side would call "impecuniosity." "A great *Lanzknecht* but the poorest prince in Germany," says one writer, because, as Commynes endeavours to explain, "his father was altogether the most stingy man, prince or commoner, that has existed in our time." He was, moreover, one of the finest and bravest of knights, most skilled in arms and letters, most affable and the most fertile in great thoughts that could be found. He possessed the subtle charm of the enchanter, knew it and used this power to depict in men's imaginations an Empire such as had not been seen for seven centuries. To give him his correct name and title, he was known as Maximilian of Hapsburg, Archduke of Austria, son of the Emperor Frederick, and already King of the Romans; that is to say, a pretender to the Imperial Crown.

All these titles did not prevent him from seeking to marry money, even at the expense of a mésalliance. This was not his first venture in the matrimonial lists, for he had already made one wealthy marriage. If, when walking in the Palace of the Dukes of Burgundy at Dijon, or in the

vineyards of Beaune, one stamps on the ground or touches the marble, bronze or gold with one's hand, one can realize the point to which the wave of his ambition might have carried him, and what extent of territory he might have grasped ; for the wife he had wedded at his first marriage was no other than Marie of Burgundy, daughter and sole heiress of Charles the Bold. He had only had to ask for her to win her. She was a " very kindly and liberal lady, well liked by her subjects, who had far more respect and fear for her than for her husband. She was very fond of her husband, and of good renown," says Commynes of her. But he had lost her after five years of married life, and had lost the best part of her heritage at the same time. That took place years before, and since then he had been thinking out the best way to arrange a further successful union.

Brittany would have suited him well enough, and in order to acquire possession of it, he had married its Duchess (Anne) by proxy, and the latter had already got as far as assuming the title of Queen of the Romans when Charles VIII, by a skilful move in that complicated chess game of the fifteenth century, succeeded in snatching her away from the future Emperor and making her his own wife. Hence arose a mortal quarrel with France. Maximilian thus turned back willingly enough in the direction of the daughter of the Duke of Milan, the Moor's niece ; that is to say, our Bianca Maria Sforza. She brought no territory, it is true, but she brought gold : 300,000

ducats of dowry, it was officially stated, and a further 100,000 were secretly added to that sum to assure her uncle's eventual succession to the dukedom of Milan. Was not this an extremely heavy price to pay for a chimerical title, and still more chimerical assistance, taking into consideration all the mountains that Maximilian's troopers would have to cross if they were ever called upon to come to the assistance of their King's new uncle? The future would no doubt reveal the answer to this question, in due course.

Meanwhile, at the end of the year 1493, all Milan was ringing with joy at having cradled an Empress. The princes and kings who for twenty years had been dreamed of as sons-in-law for her were now looked down upon, and the imaginings of poets evoked the greatest princes of Christendom, and depicted them as offering in turn their daughters to Maximilian, *con gran tesoro e infinite promesse*, but the King of the Romans,

> Lassando gli altri sconsolati in doglie
> Madonna Biancha tolse per sua moglie.

Naturally, he had never set eyes on her, nor does history relate that he had, when he married her, any idea of what she was like in features, as we, who know her portrait, have at least. He was not to see her then either, such were royal inclinations at that time. The wedding took place quite well without the presence of the fiancé, and in his stead there arrived at Milan on November 6th, his Ambassadors, Gaspar Melchiorre, Bishop

of Brixen, and Giovanni Bontempo. They were received with great pomp at the approach to the Eastern Gate, just as though the Emperor himself had been there, by the young Duke, Gian Galeazzo, his brother Ermes, and their uncle Ludovic the Moor. On the last day of the month—that is to say, on November 30th, the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle—there took place the most sumptuous wedding that the Italy of the Renaissance had witnessed until then.

Under an arch of triumph had been erected the model of the colossal equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza, by Leonardo da Vinci. The streets leading from the Castello to the Cathedral, which was then beginning to lift its towers into the air, were all hung with tapestries, awnings, flags, garlands of ivy, and all the windows filled with curious heads. Everywhere could be seen displayed, in varied and repeated profusion, the coats of arms of husband and wife : the German Eagle, extending its wings clipped down to the resemblance of thongs in a double fan, and the *vipera* or the *biscione* of the Sforzas, inherited from the Visconti ; that is to say, the big serpent with the head of a dragon, writhing like any ordinary snake and swallowing a child, that you will see in the same Arconati Visconti Room at the Louvre, if you turn to the wall opposite the one whereon hangs Bianca's portrait.

There it is, cast in a bas-relief of painted terra cotta, marked with the number 30, and with a ducal helmet crowned with a magnificent plume.

Although this was not exactly the symbol of the Sforzas, who possessed a host of others better suited to their character, it was the one they assumed most willingly and that they set most in evidence, especially when it was a question of connecting themselves to ancient dynasties. They were the arms adopted by Ottone Visconti, at the time of the First Crusade, in memory of a combat with a Saracen, who bore on his shield that design of a big serpent, a boa to all intents and purposes, swallowing a child. The golden *fleurs-de-lys* on a blue background, that can be seen on the same bas-relief, were added to this coat-of-arms by Gian Galeazzo Visconti, either on account of his relationship to the House of France, or else on account of his alliance with Charles VI.

All this raised the Sforzas in their own esteem, and they had need of it, if we are to believe Commynes, for, says he: "the marriage greatly displeased the Princes of the Empire and several friends of the said King of the Romans, because he was not marrying into a family as noble as they appeared to think he should; for on the side of the Viscontis (as are called those who rule in Milan)—the author means the Viscontis who were predecessors of the Sforzas—there is little nobility and still less in the case of this Sforza, whose son was the Duke Francesco of Milan, for he was the son of a cobbler in a small town called Contignolles (Cotignola)." It may thus be believed that in their anxiety to claim kinship to the Visconti, the Sforzas had this emblem of the devouring serpent

floated over the head of Bianca at almost every step she took through the city.

The festival was a very beautiful one and the procession well arranged. Bianca was accompanied by her sister-in-law Isabella of Aragon, the Duchess of Milan, and by her youthful aunt, Beatrice d'Este. She was mounted on a triumphal chariot, drawn by four white horses, and surrounded by cavaliers, amongst whom was the handsome Galeazzo de San Severino, the future Grand Knight of France, but for the moment supreme head of the ducal armies, and by Ambassadors of all the then-known countries, including Russia. From the windows hung tapestries, of such a description, says a poet, that:

Non han Barbari, Fiandra e la Turchia.

The Archbishop of Milan, Arcimboldi, himself sang the solemn Mass and placed the crown on Bianca's head. Her uncle, the Moor, was in ecstasies; and her mother, Bonne, forgetting all her past wrongs, wept with happiness. The common people were no less carried away with joy. There was dancing in the streets, and jousting; and at night, there were so many flames and lights that it might have been thought that a fire was consuming the town. In short, this was an incomparable and unique marriage in the history of the city, and the only thing that was lacking was the presence of the bridegroom. The populace was perhaps a little disappointed at not being treated to the sight of an Emperor passing before them,

but in his stead, they were shown a crocodile that had recently arrived, to them no less a novelty nor a smaller attraction.

Furthermore, if we wish to see for ourselves that European and almost cosmopolitan ceremony that unfolded itself wholly around our profile of the Louvre, let us read this letter addressed by Beatrice d'Este, a few days later, to her sister Isabella, the famous Marquise of Mantua :

VERY ILLUSTRIOUS LADY AND MOST DEAR SISTER,

I told you some time ago that I would relate to you in detail the triumphal ceremony that took place at Milan for the marriage of the Most Serene Queen of the Romans. Although I certainly gave orders to my secretary to send you this account, yet since you write me that it has never reached you, the blame must be laid on the Secretary and you must excuse me for my apparent negligence.

The marriage took place on the last day of last month, and in preparation for that solemnization, a porch had been erected before the principal church in the city of Milan, with columns on each side bearing a violet canopy embroidered with doves. Inside the Church, the aisles were draped with brocade as far as the choir, in front of which had been erected a triumphal arch on massive pillars. This was painted all over, and in the centre could be seen a figure of the Duke Francesco on horseback, with the ducal arms above and those of the King of the Romans. This triumphal arch was square in shape and decorated with pictures of old-time ceremonies. The imperial insignia and my husband's coat of arms were placed on the side facing the High Altar. On the further side of the arch were steps leading to a big stand erected in front of the High Altar. On the left was a small stand decked with gold brocade, where were the Embassies and on the right, a stand decked with silver brocade, and behind these stands, seats draped and arranged in tiers for the Councillors and other noblemen and gentlemen. At the ends of the choir were two raised platforms, one for the singers, and the other for the trumpeters and musicians, and between the two were seated

the Doctors of Law and Medicine, with their caps and cloaks fringed with fur, each placed according to his degree. The Altar itself was sumptuously decorated with silver vases and with images of the saints in silver, which you must have seen at the Rocchetta when you were at Milan.

The street leading to the Cathedral was magnificently decorated. There was a series of columns garlanded with ivy the whole distance from the ramparts of the Castello to the end of the Place, and between these columns garlands of branches bore cartouches with ancient emblems, and round shields with the imperial arms and those of our house. Above the street from the Castello to the Cathedral were stretched flags of the Sforza Colours. In front of many doors, the flagstaffs were decked with creepers and green foliage, in such wise that one seemed to be in the month of May. On both sides of the street the houses were decked with satin, with the exception of those houses that have recently been decorated with the frescoes that are now being made on the dwellings of Milan, and which are no less handsome than tapestries.

At about half-past nine on the morning of that day, the reverend and magnificent Ambassadors of the King of the Romans rode to the Church, escorted by the Marquis Ermes, the Count of Caiazzo, the Count Francesco Sforza, the Count da Melzo and Messer Ludovico de Fojano, and took their seats on the grand stand, in the little box on your left as you enter, this being considered as the place of greatest honour, being on the same side as the pulpit. At ten o'clock, Her Most Serene Highness mounted into the triumphal chariot, which our most dear Mother of revered memory gave me when I was at Ferrara, and that was drawn by four white horses.

The Queen wore a toilette of crimson satin embroidered with stripes of gold and covered with precious stones. Her train was of immense length, as also her hanging sleeves whose shape made them appear like two wings, and these produced a splendid effect. Her head-dress was composed of magnificent diamonds and pearls, and to add to the impressiveness of the occasion, her train was carried by Messer Galeazzo Pallavicino, and the Counts Conrado de Lando and Manfredo Torniello each carried one of her sleeves. Before the bride walked all the chamberlains, courtiers, "officers," gentlemen, feudatories, and last of all the councillors. The Queen was seated in the middle of the chariot, with the Duchess Isabella on her right, and with me on her left. The said Duchess

wore a camora of crimson satin, with gold cords worked on it, just the same as on my camora of grey material that you must remember having seen in my wardrobe. And as for me, I wore a camora of violet velvet with a cape, and embroidered on it interlaced chains in massive enamelled gold, the background in white and the chains in green so as to create the right effect—which chains were half an arm high from the ground. Likewise there were chains on the bodice in front and behind, and the sleeves were attached with the same chains. The camora had several linings of cloth of gold, and over all the collar of Saint Francis made of big pearls, and at the end, instead of the ornament, a fine balass ruby without leaves.

On the other side of the chariot were Madonna Fiordelise (a natural daughter of the Duke Francesco Sforza), Madonna Bianca (the natural daughter of Ludovic the Moor), wife of Messer Galeazzo, and the wife of the Count Francesco Sforza. Behind followed the Ambassadors sent by His Most Christian Majesty the King of France to do honour to the wedding. Then came the envoys of the different Italian States, according to their rank, with the Lord Duke and my husband on horseback. Behind followed about twelve chariots bearing the most noble damsels of Milan specially selected and invited to assist at the ceremony, and the Queen's ladies all wearing the same uniform costume, that is to say, camoras of tan satin and cloaks of pale green satin. The Duchess Isabella's ladies and my own were likewise in chariots, and when we reached the Cathedral in that order, the shops and windows all along the way were decked with satin draperies, and so packed with men and women that it would have been impossible to gauge the crowds who gathered at every corner of the streets.

When we had arrived at the door of the Cathedral, we got down out of the chariots and advanced to the steps of the stand where the Ambassadors of the King of the Romans came forward to meet the Queen and lead her to her place on the stand in front of the High Altar. Then we occupied all the seats which had been reserved for us ; that is to say, that the Ambassadors mounted into the stand decked with cloth of gold, the Queen was conducted to the stand decked with cloth of silver between the French Ambassadors, whilst behind them were seated the envoys of the other powers, the Duke and my husband, the Duchess and I. The other relatives of the bride occupied a row of seats further

down, and the centre of the stand was filled with a great concourse of ladies. Beside the Queen, councillors, feudatories and other courtiers, officers and chamberlains occupied the rest of the seats. As for the crowd, the Church, despite its dimensions, could not hold them all.

When we were all in our places, the very reverend Archbishop of Milan made his entry in full dress with his priests in their usual vestments and commenced the celebration of Mass with the most solemn ceremonial, to the sound of trumpets, flutes and organs, joined to the voices of the choir of the chapel who regulated their singing from the time of Monsignor. Hard by the pulpit, two of the priests of the ordinary of the Cathedral offered incense, one to the Ambassadors of King Maximilian, and the other to the Queen, the Duke and Duchess, and to my husband and me, who were sitting on the opposite side. When the time for it came, the Blessing was given by the Bishop of Piacenza to the representatives of the King, and by the Bishop of Como to us others who were in the other stand. After Mass had been celebrated with the greatest solemnity, the Queen rose from her seat between the Ambassadors of His Most Christian Majesty and accompanied by the Duke and my husband, the Duchess Isabella and me, and followed by all the Princes of the Blood, advanced towards the Altar.

The Ambassadors of King Maximilian came forward in their turn, and we all stood before the Altar where Monsignor the Archbishop celebrated the marriage, and the Bishop of Brixen first handed the ring to the Queen and then, assisted by the Archbishop, placed the crown on her head, which act was heralded by great fanfares of trumpets, ringing of bells, and firing of cannon. The said crown was of gold encrusted with rubies, pearls and diamonds, and constructed in the shape of small arches intercrossing. On the top was an image of the terrestrial globe, surmounted with a little Imperial Cross, after the model given by the Ambassadors, according to their Sovereign's instructions.

After this, each of us went in procession to the door of the Cathedral, the Feudatories mentioned above bearing trains and sleeves. There the women as well as the men mounted on horseback, and an awning of white edged with ermine was made ready, under which the Queen rode, preceded by the Ambassadors and all the Court, headed by the Duke and my husband.

At the side of the Queen rode the Ambassadors of the King, her

husband, the Bishop of Brixen being on her left outside the canopy; and in this order the long procession started back to the Castello. The canopy was carried the whole of the distance by Doctors in their robes, as has been mentioned above, and behind the Queen rode the Duchess and myself, followed by relatives, courtiers and guests, all on horseback. Then came the Queen's Ladies, the Duchess' and mine, all sumptuously dressed and giving a splendid effect, but the fairest of all was the Queen with the Imperial crown on her head. Nothing but cloth of gold or silver was to be seen and the people of less estate wore crimson velvet, so that the toilettes were a wonderful sight, without mentioning the countless chains of gold worn by the cavaliers and others. All those who were present agreed that they had never seen so magnificent a spectacle, and the Ambassador of Russia, who was numbered amongst them, declared that he had never witnessed such an extraordinary display of pomp. The Nuncio of His Holiness the Pope said the same thing, as well as the Ambassador of France, who declared that, although he had been present at the Coronations of the Pope, and of his own King and Queen, he had never seen anything more splendid. Your Excellency may judge from that what a wonderfully pleasant and glorious wedding this was. Everyone in the crowd was shouting with joy, and continued until we reached the Castello of Milan, where the procession broke up and the crowd dispersed. Many times during the ceremony I regretted your absence, and since my desire could not be satisfied, I thought it would be an excellent plan if I wrote you the description of it all by my own hand.

As ever, I commend myself to Your Highness.

Your Sister,

BEATRIX SFORTIA VICECOMES ESTENSIS DUCHISSA BRI.

Viglevani, XXVIIII Decem., 1493.

What Beatrice makes no mention of, and what would have perhaps interested her sister Isabella, was this. Besides the splendour of the armour and costumes, a display of force and luxury, that we can imagine from the few relics remaining of them in Museums when we think that not a

single object, however humble, was without its decorative intention, and that all, down to the very engines of destruction, bore the stamp of that Art that adds value to existence, there were souls there, a gathering of intelligence and sense that would render the smallest incidents of the fête worthy of memory. We know the faces that crowded that day into the packed Cathedral. They are more familiar to our minds and we recognize them more quickly in a crowd than those that were present at a royal wedding in the time of Louis XIV, or at the Coronation of Napoleon, their features being much more strongly characterized. To a modest and discreet eye-witness who might be present as they passed down one of the aisles of the Church, they appeared in profile, their noses turned towards the Altar, just as they appear to us to-day in their medallions or their portraits. That sharp and fishlike muzzle over there, is Ludovic the Moor. That chubby and thoughtful face belongs to Beatrice d'Este. There is the Duke Gian Galeazzo, whose mobile and pale features recall a little the Sforza type, but rather his mother's, who is there in person, the Duchess Bonne, with her big head, sensual and alert. Then pass along Erasmus Brasca, whose nose in the air and wideawake eye seem to announce him as a seeker out of diplomatic secrets ; Landriano, tall, astute and wrinkled like his treasurer's money-bags ; Giasone del Mayno, recognizable from his rare ugliness, from his flat and hooked nose ; and then so many other Doctors who have made

the name of the School of Pavia immortal. It is not forbidden to seek out and recognize in that crowd as well—whether it be the fair Crivelli or another—the lady who posed for the portrait known to us as the *Belle Ferronnière*. And it is certain that Cecilia Gallerani was to be seen there too, unrecognizable, it is true, under the respectable surname of Countess Bergamini—for it seems as though a woman, celebrated under her maiden name, adopts a pseudonym when she takes her husband's name. Finally, one can imagine that uncrowned brow, haunted by other dreams and bent under other anxieties, contemporary of all generations, whom perhaps Chance has brought there to save all this crowd and this day from oblivion. . . .

It was not only a cavalcade that was offered to the curious gaze of the public ; but the wedding presents also were on view. The ladies of Milan, admitted according to custom to pass before Bianca's trousseau that had been laid out in one of the rooms at the Castello, opened wide eyes on seeing what it comprised. We should do as much and maybe get the impression that we had by mistake got into one of the rooms of a museum, were we to set eyes on all that this little personage was to take along with her through the passes of the Rhetian Alps, in order to be able to consider herself suitably fitted out.

For there were there not only dresses, lingerie, embroideries and jewellery ; that is to say, eighteen *camoras* like the one she is wearing in our portrait,

of green velvet with crimson satin panels, or of watered green silk with panels of crimson velvet, or yet of green gold brocade, woven in relief with patterns of silver grapes; then *vestiti*, or full dress for ceremonial occasions; *sbernias*, or little floating cloaks of cloth of gold and crimson, trimmed with various furs or with white watered silk; *tabi*, with embroidered gold panels around, or of gold brocade woven in relief and furred with sable, with Spanish catskin, or lined with light silk; *sendale*; still other cloaks called *tavardette*; *roboni*, long tunics trimmed with fur, and tunics made in the Turkish style of sky blue velvet, and lined with lynxskin; scarves and headcloths of gold tissue, silver and silk, the gold and silver being woven into knots, with the hangings of dark violet and flesh-coloured silk, or with hangings of green material and crimson silk, or of green and black silk; headcloths of different coloured gauzes embroidered with gold; *lenzas*, or head fillets of gold combined with black, crimson or dark violet silk; gauze neckerchiefs with gold embroidery—one of them of black gauze embroidered in gold and silver with a fringing of crimson silk; slippers with silver embroidery, stockings, shoes and belts, every one of which was of excellent workmanship. Then the lingerie: cloth of Reims or cloth of Cambray, pillow-cases with complicated embroidery representing the figures of men and animals, worked *subtilissamamente*, says the eye-witness; a dazzle of snow-white and gold, with occasionally, other unexpected colours; twenty-five chemises

of Reims cloth trimmed with black silk ; chemises of cloth of Cambray with long sleeves reaching to the ground, trimmed with gold knots and green silk ; dressing-gowns, mantillas with golden knots ; bedsheets from Cambray ; *drapamenti* and *sparaveri* of Cambray embroidered with gold and silver ; round and square cushions of gold brocade and velvet ; hammer-cloths of Reims material for the carriage or the litter ; pillow-cases of Reims ; and finally, boxes full of perfumes—in short, everything that one might expect to find in a trousseau, was there, including—and this should give us a good idea of the work the Princess expected to occupy her spare time with—8,000 needles, 9,000 pins, and six silver thimbles.

The jewels also, taken that day from the Treasure Tower to form part of the trousseau, that was valued at a total sum of 70,000 ducats, kindled curiosity and desire as they flashed their fires. There were to be seen many a complicated ornament worked by the skilled hands of the *orafi* of Milan : collars made of countless pearls ; pendants ; a *iesus* of diamonds ; a jewel in the shape of a *brustia* ; a *rosetta*, and several combinations of stones such as Bianca is wearing as an ornament on her temple, in our portrait of the Louvre ; that is to say, a big flat balass ruby, a big diamond with facets and a big hanging pearl, the whole worth 4,000 gold ducats, or 32,000 francs, which sum of money had an infinitely greater purchasing value then than it would have now.

Still, all that might after all be seen again in a

trousseau. What transformed that nuptial pomp into a universal exhibition of the decorative arts was that the saddlers, sheath-makers, silver workers, carvers and smiths had also contributed their work to the display : " saddles for the Person of Her Majesty," sometimes of crimson velvet, sometimes of sky-blue silver brocade, or else of green or dark blue velvet, or *beretino*, or dark blue satin, or of dark blue damask, and accompanying the saddles, silver bits ; other saddles, to the number of twelve, of sky-blue satin, and twelve others of *panno tramontano* " for the Ladies of Her Majesty " ; finally, big utensils, such as a brazier, and vessels of silver, vases, platters, jugs " for the sideboard " or the buffet ; chalices, pyxes and other silver vases, and sacred articles for the " chapel " with many other objects of sacred utility, such as a *sedelino da aquasancta cum l'asperges*, all went to enhance the value of this edifying marriage portion.

It was all very beautiful and it may well be believed, even in the absence of documentary evidence to attest it, that the greater part of the women of Milan were madly envious on that day, of the destiny of their little Princess ; but if they had cared to think of it, the least important of the weddings that took place in the poorest quarter of the town, held something in store for the bride that this one did not find on her return from the ceremony—a husband. Little as this feature counts in a political marriage, it does count a little, especially from the woman's point of view ; and Bianca knew hardly anything of hers, except,

indeed, from admirable pictures of his splendour. The man she had just married wore pretty nearly the type of costume then painted on the figure of God the Father in religious pictures. His was therefore a very honourable establishment, and she would be perched so high on the social ladder, that the world would seem to her as only a little ball, that she might hold in the hollow of her hand. No woman would ever be destined to wear on her head so heavy nor so brilliant a diadem.

A somewhat chimerical diadem, it is true, but all the more splendid on that account. "King of the Romans, Emperor of Germany," was then purely an honorary title, a symbol, the inscription on a future monument, something like the writing placed at the start of a street that will be built some time, but that is not built yet. On the horizon of that Empire, could be vaguely descried immense and prosperous towns, coffers containing thousands of florins, fortified castles bristling with weapons of war, pointed towers, square towers, roofs sloping at a steep angle, almost vertically, with innumerable windows beneath, shops crammed with produce and manufactures squeezed tight up against the houses by the bastioned girdle of the ramparts ; in fact all that can be seen in the backgrounds of Albert Dürer, in the magnificent paintings which he has bequeathed to us of the Germany of that time. High above these rich territories the Eagle of Maximilian cast the clipped shadow of its heraldic wings, but as for him, the future Emperor, in order to reach that goal, he

must traverse the thick and stony forest, sitting upright, clad all in armour, through the midst of a thousand monsters and a thousand hostile brambles. Would those terrible wars and desperate difficulties in which he was engaged, sometimes against kings, sometimes against Popes, occasionally against republics, ever leave him any leisure to take notice of his wife? That she scarcely knew, or rather she knew nothing at all. She knew neither the husband who had just been provided for her, nor the country she was going to live in, nor the language she would hear spoken around her—still less the customs, ideas or traditions of those "ultramontanes," those forest people, whom she guessed to be powerful and mysterious in their mountain strongholds, separated from the Latin world by those high and bluish ranges that, like us, she saw on the backgrounds of Leonardo's pictures, behind the pensive heads of his "Ladies" or his "Virgins," blocking out the horizon.

Chapter II

AT INNSBRUCK—THE EMPRESS

TO know it, you must go and see it. Immediately after her marriage, the new Empress set out in the direction of those mountains that guarded and concealed so much treasure. She started for Como, in great state and accompanied by an immense suite. Almost the whole of her family rode with her : first the Duchess Bonne, her mother ; then her brother the Duke of Milan, Gian Galeazzo, already marked with the signs of a premature end ; her sister-in-law, Isabella of Aragon, destined from about that time to become the " most unhappy of women " ; her other brother, Ermes ; her uncle, Ludovic the Moor, with Beatrice d'Este ; her cousin, Francesco Sforza ; and finally, friends like San Severino, Pier Scipione Pallavicino, the Archbishop of Milan, poets like Gasparo Visconti, diplomats like the legist Giasone del Mayno, Baldassare Pusterla (who was surnamed, I do not know why, the *Fabulator*), and Erasmus Brasca, the skilled writer, who had arranged her marriage with Maximilian, and who was being given her as mentor to guide her first steps at the Court full of pitfalls where

she was going to reign ; without mentioning a host of maids of honour and chamberlains.

All this fine cavalcade wound slowly through the Lombard countryside, between hedges of contadini assembled in crowds to see the royal procession passing. The first evening a halt was made at the village of Meda, whence a fresh start was made for Como. There, the Bishop (Antonio Trivulzio), the clergy, nobility, jurisconsults and Doctors, in ceremonial attire, came to meet the new Queen and conduct her, under an awning, to the palace that had been made ready for her. The remainder of her wedding escort dispersed amongst the noble houses of the town and the neighbourhood to spend the night. On the morrow, after bidding farewell to her mother, and to the brother she was destined never to set eyes on again, and to her sister-in-law, to Ludovic the Moor, and to Beatrice d'Este, who were not going with her beyond Como, Bianca, followed by the rest of the escort, embarked on a galley manned and provided by the citizens of Torno, that was all draped with tapestries and greenery, and propelled by forty rowers. A sister ship to take off the passengers, in case there might be a storm, and a whole fleet of boats splendidly painted and adorned with flags, accompanied them.

Travels, like everything else at that time, seemed to be made specially for the benefit of painters. Travelling was neither rapid, nor was it sure, and it was certainly by no means comfortable ; but it was beautiful. The least of tourists to-day, can

make a tour of the Italian lakes at less expense, and with greater facilities, speed and certainty; but the greatest traveller cannot make a more picturesque one. Chroniclers relate that at that moment, a sunbeam, piercing the bank of clouds, fell on the flat, dull surface of the lake that for several days had been lying placid under a stormy sky. But that ray of sunshine was not destined to last long. The crossing, however, went off fairly well, as far as Bellagio, that was situated at the fork of the two lakes. There, Bianca disembarked and stayed with one of the Moor's intimates, the Marchesino Stanga, in the brand new palace he had had built in that place, with a fair amount of taste, we may suppose, if it was anything like the example that we have in the Louvre of another of his palaces, the one at Cremona; that wonderful carved stone doorway, set on the ground floor, at the entrance to the Michel Angelo room.

On the following morning, her host accompanied his sovereign on a boat provided by the people of Sala, the swiftest of all the boats on the lake. Unfortunately, hardly were they out in the open than a terrible wind arose. The vessel plunged about in the storm, and there was some danger that she might sink. On those Italian lakes, it seems as though the wind, not having sufficient room to spread itself, and sweeping round without finding any exit, becomes furiously exasperated at the constraint imposed upon it by the girdle of high mountains surrounding the water, and the resulting storm becomes thus all the more dreadful. The party

had lost its fine serenity. The men endeavoured to conceal their fears behind an ill-humour. The women wept copious tears and prayed to God for mercy. The boatmen were undecided as to what saint they should invoke. Alone, in the universal panic and the raging tempest, the jurist Giacone del Mayno kept his wits and used them to calm the fears of the rest. Another target all ready for his sarcasm and for the curses of all that noble company, was the famous Ambrogio da Rosate, the Moor's astrologer, who after numerous calculations and assiduous trafficking with the stars, had designated that day as being especially propitious for a crossing. Part of the flotilla was at last able to reach Bellano. Bianca disembarked there with the whole of her party and recovered from her first emotions on the stormy waves of her new life. One may well believe that the many humanists in the escort comforted themselves by comparing their impressions with those of their beloved Virgil, and that the *caecis undis* and the *gurgite vasto* embellished the abundant descriptions of the tempest they made to their affrighted hearers. The rest of the journey was, however, to be far worse, and their troubles were but beginning.

On December 8th, the nuptial procession entered the mountains on its way to Innsbruck by the Stelvio Pass. A mule track, winding through the midst of snow, clouds and precipices to a height of nearly 9,000 feet was the only triumphal road open to the young bride in order that she might join her husband. After the flag-draped streets

of Milan, it was a hardship ; but to climb the throne of Cæsar, through what would one not pass when one is twenty ? Behind the frozen buttresses of the Bernina, the Ortler, and all that range of snowy giants which dominate the valley of the Trafoï, there lay exile, cold, the very edge, it seemed, of the abyss, but it was the Empire ! Through sixteen mortal days of marching, where life was risked at every step they took, where they saw all vegetation and every living substance getting rarer and then finally quite cease and disappear, they struggled on. The young Queen groaned with her whole soul. Brasca comforted her as best he could, swearing to her every morning as he put her in her saddle that the most difficult part of the road had been passed, and that the going would be better than it had been the previous day—and it was worse ! And she cried out treachery at him !

There was no greater display of pluck amongst her followers. It was necessary to pick up the worn-out maids of honour all along the way, notably Madonna Michela, who had been unable to get any further than Gravedona. In the end, worn-out, exhausted and no doubt famished, the Imperial wedding procession, dragging behind it its long and winding file of pack horses, baggage, sacks and coffers filled with plate, linen and dresses, descended the further slope of the Rhetian Alps and succeeded in reaching the bottom of the Innsbruck valley on Christmas Eve. The pretty town built along the banks of the River Inn,

one of the paradises of the modern tourist on fine summer days, must have seemed like Dante's frozen regions to anyone coming from sunny Italy. The truth of the saying "In the Tyrol there are nine months of winter and three of cold," was going to be driven forcibly home to them. Eventually they got there, and Bianca no doubt consoled herself for all her troubles and sufferings by the thought that in that town and the palace, where all was made ready to receive her, she was going to meet her husband.

She did not meet him there, for he had not arrived, and had no intention of coming either. He had his head too full of many other anxieties to go and make the acquaintance of his wife. He was a great man, was this fallacious husband, and even a man of genius, if one cares to so term him, in the same way as Charles XII was later; that is to say, restless, unstable, feckless, paradoxical, and proud. He was a soldier who usually lost his battles; a husband who lost his wives; a poet who left his poems uncompleted; a diplomat who became himself entangled in the nets he had skilfully laid for others; a patron who lacked money to pay his artists; a Knight of the Round Table, "the last Knight," it was said, but one who, always at grips with diets, assemblies, councils of notabilities and at the mercy of votes, appears to us very much like the forerunner of our own parliamentary sovereigns; finally, a bold venturer into marriage and a privileged heir, something resembling the universal legatee of the whole of

Europe. . . . And yet, with all that, he was a great figure who was destined to leave a great work, the hegemony of the House of Austria, almost finished, and pass through the painted dreams of Albert Dürer, like the symbol of an ancient dynasty wending its way towards the future—such was Maximilian, or such at least, he appears to us to-day. Bent over the many-coloured mosaic of States, Free Towns, Principalities, Bishoprics, Duchies, Republics, as over a prodigious puzzle, and endeavouring to make up the picture of the Holy Roman Empire artistically, minutely, despite a host of interferers, after an ideal that he carried in his head, he was a man devoted to an immense and unending task, for the elements that he was trying to blend were of themselves unstable and constantly changing.

Still, was this the husband dreamed of by that young wife? Or even a husband purely and simply? His absence from Innsbruck at the very time of her arrival after passing through so many fatigues and dangers, did not seem of especially good augury for her. Did he at least summon her to go on and rejoin him where he was? Not a bit of it! He made no more mention of her coming to Vienna, where he happened to be then, than he had the idea of going to Innsbruck where she was. In her stead, he summoned his intimate and her mentor, Erasmus Brasca. What was all this leading up to? That was the question the Milanese diplomat put to himself on receiving the order. He started at once, bearing to the Emperor

a quite respectful and shy autograph letter from his Queen, and with which it seems she was satisfied, for she sent a copy of it to her uncle, Ludovic the Moor, while complaining of her husband's absence. That letter is an extraordinary one. What, in his preceding messages, had Maximilian been able to tell her or give her to understand, for her, tired out as she must have been, to write him in the following strain :

Most Serene King and Lord of Mine,

I find myself under such obligations towards Your Majesty that I remain stupefied with the love you show for me. It would not be possible for me to express the joy that echoes through my soul at the thought of it, and because I am not capable of putting it into writing, I am instructing Messer Erasmus Brasca to tell Your Majesty, to whom I commend myself, of it in his own voice, trusting that you may believe him.

Ex Hyspruch XXVI Decembris 1493. *Majestatis Vestre Serva Blanca Maria manu propria.*

With this missive in his possession, Brasca arrived at Vienna on January 13th, 1494, somewhat anxious. If it was a question of his personal position and his credit at the Imperial Court, he was at once reassured. The King of the Romans loaded him with honours, made him senator, and allowed him entry into all the councils of his chamberlains—but said no word of the Queen. Had he forgotten that he was married, that he had espoused Bianca Maria Visconti Sforza, sister of the Duke of Milan and richly dowered, with the avowed intention of gaining prestige for her family thereby? "How now?" said Brasca to

himself, and went deliberately to work. He represented to the distant and cold sovereign the loneliness of his young Queen, the long waiting that she was being forced to undergo, the falseness of her situation, and " for fear that wrong-intentioned folk might draw unfavourable conjectures about the Queen and her family," he begged him to summon his wife to come to Vienna, or at least to go and join her at Innsbruck.

Maximilian listened to him in an absent-minded way. He was thinking of matters that seemed much more urgent and of greater consequence to himself ; notably, the meetings between the Moor and the King of France, the threats of Charles VIII against Italy. . . . He sounded Brasca on these matters. What was his gossip the Moor scheming ? The subtle Milanese parried that courteous thrust as well as he could and returned to the attack. He polished up and produced his best arguments, but it was all of no avail. The King of the Romans opposed no resistance. He did not deny that he was married and bound to certain duties. He had others that were more pressing, that was all. He therefore replied that " the recommendations were quite unnecessary, because he was really very fond indeed of his Most Serene Queen, so that no husband could love his wife more dearly than did he, and that above everything else he desired to set eyes on her. Only, he had been so vastly occupied with other matters that were extremely pressing until that moment that it had been impossible for him to get away ; and that now,

having brought the greater part of his business to a successful conclusion, he expected in a very few days to be at liberty, so that he might go to Hispruch."

Those few days were, however, to become two months, and the young wife waited for her husband throughout the whole winter in vain. Her courtiers, embarrassed and vaguely anxious, busied themselves to the best of their ability in amusing her by providing spectacles for her. For this purpose, they offered her a pike—a monstrous and fabulous pike, served in *zeladia*, a sort of meat juice—that made its entry in great state like a prince, to the sound of trumpets, and surrounded by little figures of men and women made of baked almonds. This took place at her wedding dinner on December 29th, 1493. From the place of honour she occupied under a canopy of crimson cloth of gold, shaped like an awning, Bianca watched more dishes pass in succession on the tables than Gamache ever offered to his guests, or than the village doctor of Tirteafuera ever forbade to Sancho Panza. Capons, fish swimming in horse-radish sauce, a sucking-pig stuffed with a concoction of radishes, more capons, a stag constructed of black jelly, two lions and a porcupine built of roasted almonds, other capons served with mincemeat, a pasty, Italian pastries, chickens, more capons, marchpanes and sweets, the whole washed down with red and white wines, heralded with fanfares of trumpets and terminated by a soprano solo sung by a hunchback, and with games.

Bianca was not the only one to enjoy all these blandishments. At the palace she had found an uncle of her husband's, the Archduke Sigismund, Count of Tyrol, with his young wife, Catherine, who was youthful and gay, and she amused herself as best she could in the company of these princely personages, as far as amusement could be found at Innsbruck in the heart of winter, four hundred years ago. The Milanese ladies who had come in the Queen's suite were dressed and disguised in the German fashion. Ambrogio de Predis, the supposed author of our portrait of the Louvre, and who had been brought to Germany, was commanded to paint portraits of the lords of the Imperial Court in the Italian style. The exchange and intermixture of the elegancies of the two Courts little by little brought into being that cosmopolitan and irritatingly opulent aspect that may be noticed in the greater part of the portraits of princesses of that period, and notably in the case of that portrait of Bianca Maria, painted a few years later by Strigel. But after all, for Bianca and her following it was a few hours gained. . . .

However, the Emperor still did not turn up. . . . The hyperbolical praises with which his courtiers flattered his wife did not perhaps entirely convince her of his almost supernatural perfections, but at least she was forced to concede him a certain resemblance with the Divinity in that he remained invisible. . . . Was that only the effect of circumstances? It was feared that it might be the result of a conspiracy. The grandees and other

lords who were known to be furious at what they considered Maximilian's mésalliance, had not been strong enough to hinder his marriage. Would they at least succeed in preventing its consummation and the birth of an heir ?

At last, the Imperial promise was fulfilled. Our profile of the Louvre found herself for the first time in the presence of the profile of Maximilian, such as we see it, with his horse-like face, his hooked nose, his long hair falling in a thousand curls and his heavy collar of the Golden Fleece, in the portrait painted by the same Ambrogio de Predis, and which is now at Vienna. On March 15th, Erasmus Brasca writes to Ludovic the Moor, that on the 13th, the so long awaited husband arrived at Innsbruck, and that from that day, he has carried out all his duties. "His Most Serene Majesty appears to have no time for anything else but to cajole the Queen and is continually making a great fuss of her." Rejoicing at the Castello of Milan and consequent confusion amongst the jealous, the envious and other enemies !

As for the happiness of the Royal pair, all theories may be permitted and even the least optimistic may be countenanced. They may well be, because Bianca's life, however near her her husband might be in person, appears to have remained as far off from his. It had been a case of marrying a dowry to a coat-of-arms. The one had been paid, the other blazed with the most flattering reflection of the whole of Europe and of the King of France. The object of the marriage was thus attained, and

after that was said and done, sentimental happiness and conjugal felicity would seem as futile and uncalled for as the plumes of white heron for Bianca's toilette, which she used to send for to every part of the world.

Whilst she decorated herself with plumes, her husband chased after wild beasts, for the hunting of Maximilian was famous, and can be followed in detail on the tapestries of Van Orley. His fifteen hundred hounds covered the ground around him like a moving carpet, his falcons darkened the sky. His sport so occupied him, that he entirely forgot his wife, and would remain as long as twenty days absent in the mountains and valleys, hunting the wild boar or watching for bear or chamois. Pecopin used to always end up by returning to Bauldour, and doubtless he did not find her greatly aged during his absence. But if twenty days do not mark features in such a way that they are unrecognizable, perhaps they are sufficient to stifle tenderness and devotion in a woman's heart, especially in a heart as soft and shallow as Bianca's. It was perhaps that very lightness that drove the King away. In sentimental actions, one never can really distinguish cause from effect. Moreover, Maximilian was constantly comparing Bianca of Milan with his first wife, a vastly annoying mania with some remarried widowers and widows, and if he found her quite as pretty as Maria of Burgundy, he found her far inferior in wisdom, and did not refrain from telling her so. It is true that he used to add philosophically "She will grow wiser!"

As a matter of fact, the Milanese were rather of the same mind, and it was really a peculiar kind of Empress they had brought him there. She had some crazes that were by no means imperial, as for example, eating on her knees in her room, instead of going to dinner with the ceremony usual to meals at that time. It was necessary for her mentors, Brasca and Maffeo, to make respectful representations to her before she would decide on more stateliness. This she then carried to excess, and once in the King's apartment, adopted an imperious tone, that was in striking contrast to her usual nonchalance. Especially was she greedy, or rather gluttonous, with a satisfied and unbreakable gluttony that caused her frequent illness, alarmed her doctors, and was the subject of secret reports on the part of diplomats. This slight but apparent vice did not enhance her prestige in the eyes of the Court, and most certainly diminished it in the eyes of her husband who attributed her sterility to her overeating. He reproached her also for her excessive spending—an unexpected kind of reproach in the man of whom Machiavelli said : "There does not exist and, I think, has never existed, a more spendthrift prince. The result is that he is always hard up, and whatever the situation may be at the time, he has never sufficient money." An unexpected but logical reproach, for he suffered all the more from his wife's unthriftiness since he was also afflicted with the same unfortunate propensity himself, and thus the exaggeration of their two characters

made things worse, instead of compensating each other.

Maximilian, himself, must have had great need of a counterpoise. If we may believe Machiavelli, he was the very spirit of inconsistency. "He wants something to-day, and does not want it to-morrow. He refuses to take anyone's advice and believes what everyone tells him. He desires what he cannot have and is disgusted at what he could get. Hence, the contrary resolutions that I see him making at every moment," says the Florentine secretary. And he adds this trait, that well depicts "the man with the big thoughts," who was more philosopher than King: "At his audiences, he shows great affability, but he will only grant them when it suits him. He does not like Ambassadors coming to pay him their respects, unless he has summoned them to his presence. He is extremely secret and close, and lives in a constant state of agitation of mind and body. . . ." What a partner for the soft and sensual child that the portrait of Ambrogio de Predis reveals to us, and whom an eye-witness justly taxes with *noncuranza* (nonchalance). What was there astonishing in the fact that her husband grew into the habit of only seeing her in the evening at the dinner hour, and of passing the whole day at his own occupations, far from her side!

She comforted herself as best she could, with her toilettes, her perfumes, her confessor and her friends—one especially who had followed her from Milan and who, it seems, scarcely left her day or

PORTRAIT OF MAXIMILIAN, KING OF THE ROMANS.
Municipal Gallery, Vienna.

To face p. 234.

night. This was a girl named Violante Caimi, the wife of a chamberlain who had also come from Milan, a good-looking person, but an insidious chatterbox and busybody, ceaselessly occupied in concocting intrigues, and who seemed to have inspired her sovereign with an unlimited tenderness for her. Occasionally Maximilian was surprised to hear his wife murmuring in her sleep : " Oh ! my Violante ! " and the good man would awaken her to tell her : " I am not Violante. . . ." The fact remains that he held far less place in the preoccupations and the daily life of the Queen than her pretty and captivating friend, and therefore there is nothing astonishing in the fact that he held less in her dreams.

At every turn the girl's hold over the Queen seems to be denounced by the representatives, or rather the spies, of the Moor. One day Bianca, in a vein of sudden affection, had the idea of writing a letter to her uncle " in her own hand " ; but no sooner had the secretary gone off to get the materials ready for her, than she as quickly changed her mind, pretended that she had a headache, ordered that the letter should be written for her and that she would merely sign it. " That change of mind could have only come about in my opinion," says the secretary, " through Violante, who was sitting in the room with Her Majesty."

That in itself may be forgiven, and Maximilian no doubt was very easily consoled over the idea that his wife did not write frequently enough or in her own handwriting, to her uncle, but he had

more serious complaints against her favourite. On one occasion, when the town of Cologne had offered Bianca 2,000 florins as tribute from the Rhine, Violante had found means to get her to spend the whole amount in a single day. This irritated the master all the more that, being intensely prodigal himself, he proposed to reserve the monopoly of prodigality to himself. At last, he discovered that she was intriguing with Girolamo Venti, the Ambassador of Naples. This time, it was a question of politics and, getting really annoyed, he forbade his wife in future to receive this intriguing diplomat. However, Violante was still there and still so astute and domineering that Brasca made his mind up and spoke out very clearly his opinion of her ; that if Her Majesty's affairs were to be put in order, she and her husband must be expelled from Germany, and "the Queen would have forgotten all about her in a week"—an illuminating remark on the presumed depth of her feelings.

Deprived of her friend she would find consolations, he doubtless supposed, in adornment, the pleasures of the table, or in piety. Indeed, she loaded her uncle with requests concerning dress : she wanted rows of pearls from the Countess of Imola, perfumes in powder form, heron plumes which were provided for her by the astrologer, Ambrogio da Rosate, for whom, anyway, she had found judicious employment—a *turchina*, a dress of white brocade, an *officioletto*, that it seems could be got nowhere else but in Milan. Likewise, a confessor. . . . It must be believed that Germany

had been able to furnish her with nothing comparable to a certain Capuchin monk, who had left his monastery of Saint Angelo, at Milan, to come and see his sister in Germany. She had made him the director of her conscience, and no longer wished to let him go, so much did she value him for his "consolation and his utility," and because he "put her on the right path and in a better disposition than she had been for a long time."

It may be supposed also that, apart from their intrinsic value, these jewels, dresses, perfumes, and even persons, possessed one great merit for her, and this was that they came from Lombardy—from that land of sunshine, of fertile and boundless plains, of happy meetings, of courtyards and terraces, of music, of a melodious tongue, and of flowers; the land of her childhood, the most decorative and elegant in the whole world, which the whole world recognized as such, if we may believe the words of the poet.

Bel paese e Lombardia
Degno assai, ricco e galante . .

sang the merchants of the "far distant and great kingdom of Soria," who had crossed the seas to come and see what it was:

Tanta fama e per il mondo
del gran vostro alto Milano
che solcando il mar profondo
siam venuti dal lontano
gran paese soriano
per vedere se cosi sia
Bel paese e Lombardia.

What a contrast must Innsbruck have been, at the bottom of a valley of the Alps, with its sad buildings and high towers out of sight most of the year in the mist; its heavy, snow-covered mountains hermetically sealing the outlet of every street, as though to batten down and shut in dreams; its people speaking a barbarous tongue and muffled up in enormous greatcoats, their nature and customs burying beneath a leaden pall every instinct and sentiment that blossoms forth and offers itself to the sunshine in Italy!

And yet, it was her lucky star that guided her there, for Innsbruck was a sure refuge in those turbulent times, whereas Milan, exposed to foreign invasion, was about to be laid waste by storms. Very soon, from that enchanted country she so deeply regretted, there would begin to arrive bad news that would get worse and worse until the final catastrophe. First, there was the premature death of her brother, Gian Galeazzo, the Duke of Milan, who, it was asserted, had been poisoned by their uncle, the Moor. He was simply a victim of his gluttony, just as she herself would be one day, for it was to the Moor's interest in every way to keep him alive. Was she very distressed about it? That one does not know. The letter she wrote from Antwerp, where she had been to visit her new States, to her uncle, who had become Duke of Milan, expresses no very definite feeling. She merely compliments him on the title he has managed to acquire for himself—in spite of the fact that it was to the detriment of his own

nephew, and of hers—and assures him that in her he will always find an ally with Maximilian. Moreover, she slips in a prayer that, in view of her rank and situation, becomes a kind of command, in favour of her relatives, in this brief and rather pharisaical form: "And, although we believe that it is not altogether necessary, nevertheless We recommend to Your Excellency, Our Most Illustrious Mother, Our Most Illustrious Brother, and the children of the Most Illustrious Lord Duke Our Brother."

That last was, maybe, merely some form of satisfaction rendered to her mother, the Duchess Bonne, who from the exile whither she had returned, wrote plaintive and indignant letters to her daughter. These letters, indeed, did not always reach their destination. They were sometimes burned by the secretaries whom the Moor had prudently interposed between his niece and the outside world. However, in the long run, Bianca came to realize that things were not going smoothly between her uncle and her mother, and as far as her indolence would permit her, she endeavoured to remedy that state of affairs.

The death of her brother was but the beginning of a series of alarms and periods of mourning. The French, who had made a descent into Italy commanded by Charles VIII in person, at the Moor's request, seemed to be now turned against him and threatening the safety of the Duchy. Then came the news that little Bianca Giovanna Sforza, the thirteen-year-old wife of the handsome

Galeazzo of San Severino, had just died, and with her had gone the light and joy of the ducal Court. Shortly afterwards, the sudden death of Beatrice d'Este completed the overwhelming of the "Child of Fortune," who had been so insolently happy until then. "We are especially very grieved," wrote Maximilian to him on this subject, "to think that you, whom We love so much, will have lost in her, not only a dear wife, but a companion who shared the burden of power to such a high degree with you, dispelling your worries and brightening your troubles by her presence. Although she belonged to that small number of women worthy of perpetual regret and eternal remembrance [as he wrote this, Maximilian was certainly thinking of his first wife, Marie of Burgundy, and one cannot tell how Bianca interpreted the phrase 'small number'], such a premature death is not really a misfortune for her for, since we must all die one day, those are more favoured who die young and who, after having lived through a happy youth, are ignorant of the countless calamities of this sad world and the trials of old age. Your wife, greatly favoured by Fortune, possessed all that beautifies life; no physical or mental gift, nor the privileges that follow in the wake of beauty and birth, were lacking to her. She was in every respect worthy of being your wife and of ruling over the most prosperous country in Italy. She has left you the sweetest children, who will recall to you their dead mother's characteristics, and will prove a comfort to you in your

present grief as well as a prop to your old age. And when the time comes for you to rejoin her, you will be able to bequeath to them a peaceful throne and the everlasting memory of your name. . . ."

Nothing could be more specious than that last consolation, or more hazarded than that prophecy, for the Moor, saved the first time from the scheming of the Duke of Orleans at the time of Charles VIII's expedition against Naples, was going to be menaced again by the same personage, when he had mounted the throne of France. The second French expedition into Italy, with Milan this time as its objective and Louis XII as its instigator, very soon threw him into a mortal panic. He turned to Maximilian and to his niece, and called for help. . . . "I should be grateful if you will arrange for the Most Serene Queen to commend me to His Majesty, for now is the time for her to make a demonstration of the affection she bears for me!" he wrote to his Envoy at Innsbruck on August 7th, 1499.

Despite all her *noncuranza*, Bianca could not refrain from appreciating the happy contrast of her lot. War and Revolution were lifting their heads on the Lombard Plains, whilst the Tyrol remained as firm as a rock—that abrupt and craggy rock that seems to fill the window, in the background of the portrait of Maximilian by Strigel. The Moor and Maximilian were alike in one essential point, and therein, it may well be believed, lay the real reason for their mutual sympathy. Both of them were dreamers and builders of chimerical

monuments, but whereas the first built his Babel on the shifting sand of opinion and Italian Alliances, the second constructed his house on the solid ground of German Fidelity. The one only relied on intrigues and money, the other counted for his protection upon the solid rampart of his *lanzknechts*. "Help, lanzknechts!" cried out the Moor in his despair. His niece did her utmost to send him her troops in exchange for the dresses, perfumes and plumes she received from Milan, but it was a far more difficult matter.

To begin with, if Maximilian possessed enough troops and had sufficient in hand to have nothing to fear himself from his enemies, he had so many States to defend, that his battalions were spread out and dissipated indefinitely on every horizon of his Empire, and he had never enough left over to spare for his ally. His "good towns" certainly furnished him with men, but for so short a period at a time, that, thanks to the slowness of recruiting, half the effectives had already left their camp before the other half came up for service—a fact that caused no little amusement to Machiavelli. Thus, the King of the Romans spent his time in imaginary concentrations of semi-phantom armies, for still-born expeditions.

To raise others, he would have needed money, and that was the one commodity he lacked most of in the world. The Diets were so stingy with him, when he asked for subsidies, that he was sometimes reduced to the point of having to raise money not only on jewellery and pearl necklaces, but

even his wife's linen. Moreover, he was never with her, and all the persuasive arguments she might have brought to bear in favour of her uncle were useless with so fugitive and imperceptible a husband. She was almost reduced to addressing him, as she would God the Father, by monological and humble prayers from a distance.

To sum him up, Maximilian was from the very nature of his mind, the most disappointing and slow of Providences. It was not that he ever ran short of ideas and stratagems, far from it! As the Venetian Envoy remarked, he had admirable ideas and that were suitable for any possible occasion. Unfortunately, he had too many of them! Hardly had he shaped one, than he found a better, and thus it was ever the case, and the time for action had passed before he had accomplished anything. Between these two dreamers, there was needed a Catherine Sforza to bring about order and decision. Her sister, or rather half-sister Bianca, was quite incapable of doing so, and ruin was upon them without their knowing exactly why, when, or how it had occurred.

The troopers of Maximilian, started at last on their way to bring help to Milan, had arrived too late. The Moor, beaten by the French, betrayed by the Governor of the Castello, was a fugitive with a handful of devoted partisans, and arrived eventually at his niece's palace at Innsbruck. There is nothing more lamentable than the emigration of Princes, the appearances of a Court without the strength of a State, the unexpected hospitality

extracted from a Foreign Kingdom, the request for support that inevitably means invasion and devastation of the country of the applicant, the intrigues and ill temper of the councillors whose advice was insufficiently listened to, of the followers now become critical, and of the courtiers become censors. The Moor became acquainted with all this at his niece's court, and also with the cabals of Milanese refugees against him. Once calumnies are let loose there is no power in the world that can arrest them. People even went to the length of pretending that Bianca was reclaiming her personal treasure, saved from the wreck by him, on the grounds that it had been built up by her own father and brother. The rumour had of course no actual foundation, and Bianca on the contrary, never ceased assisting and maintaining him. A second time he tried his fortune at arms, started off to Italy with Maximilian's aid, and never returned. His second period of rule had only lasted eighty days, and afterwards there came the end of all things for him, his surrender to the French and his captivity in the Castle of Loches. Bianca could do nothing more for him, but to intercede with her husband for him with the King of France, that he might be allowed greater liberty. This they did immediately, with courage and obstinacy, but all in vain. The Moor died in his cell, surrounded by all the ghosts of his past happy life, and maybe of his remorse as well. Bianca had at least saved the prisoner's children, Massimiliano and Francesco, whom she brought

up and kept at her side until her death. Since she herself had brought no children to her husband, it was her two young exiled cousins who became her family.

As for the Emperor, he was more estranged from her than ever ; ever in the mountains or valleys, visiting his " good towns," or his camps, casting cannon, making speeches, equipping lanzknechts, fomenting leagues, seeking money, thinking over poems. Ever ready to fight or to set other people at each other's throats, readier still to marry them, and, above all, to be their heir whenever it seemed humanly possible to him, the only place where one might be pretty nearly certain of *not* meeting him, was his wife's fireside. The news that reached her was often glorious, often tragic, but never happy for Bianca. One day, she heard of the marriage of her step-daughter Marguerite to Philibert the Handsome, Duke of Savoy, famous in the History of Art on account of his tomb at Brou ; another day she would hear about the Emperor's battles in the North to recover the Duchy of Gueldres, or in the South, in Bavaria, or of the success of his heavy artillery at Kufstein. Those, however, were not events likely to vastly amuse the Milanese woman. On the other hand, the news that her step-son, the Archduke Philip, had died suddenly and that his young widow Jeanne had gone mad through grief, could not but throw a gloomy shadow over the Court at Innsbruck. All this, however, served Maximilian's purpose more or less, and little by little the news

spread that he had set his hand on the regency of the Kingdom of Spain ; and finally, with the consent of the Pope, he was crowned Emperor with great ceremony, in the old cathedral at Trent.

Bianca was now Empress, and this time in title ; but she was not to remain so long. Her life was drawing to a close, shortened by ill-health and her excesses at table, which her doctors had never ceased warning her against. Her husband scarcely worried himself about her. He was engaged in taking vengeance on Venice, and his chief occupation at the moment was getting his heavy artillery over the Brenner Pass in order to bring it before Padua, where he was to meet two knights after his own heart—Bayard and La Palisse. Then, he had to argue before the Diet of Augsburg, to get from it subsidies or troops, which it doled out very meanly to him. The whole of Europe was intrigued and disturbed by the evolutions of this subtle megalomaniac. During this time, his son's widow, Jeanne the Mad, was groaning out her spirit in a gloomy palace somewhere in Spain, and in another country there was growing up the last hope of his dreams, the child who was later to be known as Charles V. What might Bianca count, who had not even been able to bring him a son, when weighed in the balance with such heavy tasks as these, with this world to conquer, and that child trained to hold it in the hollow of his little hand !

He was not there to meet her, at her first arrival in Germany ; nor was he there when she left—

her final departure. When she died, at Innsbruck on December 31st, 1510, he was at Freiburg-in-Brisgau, occupied in negotiating with or fighting against the whole of Europe. The disappearance of the Italian woman counted for little, and she left far less space than she had filled place. He mourned her, however, in chosen and measured terms of praise, ordered the Court to go into mourning, and even pretended that his daughter regretted her, who, so far as she was concerned, was only a step-mother. After that was over he continued his work, the puzzle of his life, and one that we to-day should call the "rememberment" of the Empire.

Moreover, if any feminine vision had been able to distract his thoughts from his work, it was the memory of his first wife, Marie of Burgundy, whom he had never ceased to regret and to love. She had only been his companion for a very little while, but she had been the companion of his youth, at that time when years count double and when the colours that illuminate life are unfadable. He had married her for political reasons, as he had married Bianca, but it had just happened that that rich heiress of a Duchy as fine as any kingdom possessed as ardent and fine a soul as a precious stone, and which united itself to his. A woodcut in the *Roi Blanc*, that romantic tale, in which he relates his own life, shows us the royal couple sitting in a garden. It is the walled garden of the *Roman de la Rose*, the one mentioned by Hans Sachs, the poet who was soon to try his wings at

the very Court of this mysterious Emperor. He, Maximilian, is all muffled up in his big royal robe, and crowned with laurel; whilst she, Marie, wears a tall peaked headdress and has long narrow sleeves that just show the tips of her fingers. What are those two lovers doing amidst the flowers, do you suppose? They are busy teaching each other their respective mother tongues. She is teaching him French, whilst he teaches her Old German; and the countryside around them and their own youthfulness of heart furnish in themselves sufficient themes for words to say and to translate, together with those which no human language has ever been able to translate, nor will ever translate.

Ah! he could never have invented such a pastime with Bianca! She offers a complete antithesis to Marie. To judge of this, it is sufficient to see them both standing, represented in bronze, around his tomb, in front of the Cathedral at Innsbruck. The visitor, passing between the two hedges of fierce heroes and decorated ladies, who form this "escort of death" around the Emperor, will recognize them at once. They are not together. Marie of Burgundy is on one side, beside Elizabeth of Hungary, whilst Bianca Maria Sforza is on the other, between Marguerite of France and Sigismund of Tyrol. When comparing these two figures, one receives the impression that one has passed from one century and its civilization to another; but still, they are contemporary or quasi-contemporary with one another. One, however, is turned towards the past, and the other

towards the future. Marie of Burgundy still wears the tall headdress and the fillet of the Middle Ages. On Bianca's head is her own hair only, just as in the portrait at the Louvre, except that a sort of crown is fitted on it. The "slashes" that puff up at her shoulders and elbows, and the design of her brocade dress, proclaim the Renaissance style; and the arrangement of her jewellery announces this as well. It is the ephemeral dress of a day, that is here faithfully reproduced in everlasting material—an evidence of a society whose most futile fashions found an artist to bequeath them to posterity, in an indestructible and sacred form, and under the combined protection of Art and Death.

Those two successive and dissimilar wives of Maximilian represent the two contradictory aspects of his life and of his multiple and restless soul. The first, daughter of Charles the Bold, is the symbol of a narrow-minded and conservative world, based on the strength of the feudal Lord and his men-at-arms, seeking to live and conquer without intermixing. The second, the Moor's niece, symbolizes the New Politics—composed of concessions and alliances, the reconstruction of the more important States—based still on force, but also on mutual concessions and combined interests. One of these two worlds had just come to grief at Granson and Morat; the other was scarcely out of the cradle, built from the ruins of the Middle Ages. And he, Maximilian, attached to the old world by every one of his roots, stretched out

enquiring arms towards the limitless horizons of the future. It is this "Janus" attitude that makes him so mysterious and disturbing a physiognomy.

He is there too, in the Church at Innsbruck, but raised high above his two wives by his supreme dignity. Seated on his empty tomb, as on a throne, his head crowned with the enormous imperial diadem that on its intercrossed arches bears the terrestrial globe and the Cross of Redemption, he seems absorbed in secular meditation, and alone, as is meet and fitting for the Emperor that he was and the Pope he aimed at being! No one was daring enough to allot him any companions other than the cardinal virtues. If, alongside this proud cenotaph, one evokes in one's memory the peaceful figures in the Chartreuse at Pavia—Ludovic the Moor lying in his eternal rest beside the companion of his life, Beatrice d'Este—one can measure the distance between the two races: the Archduke of Austria, Emperor of Germany, tied by every chain of tradition to the feudal world, alone in the beatification of his supreme power and right divine; and the politician of the new period, the philosopher of the Renaissance and son of an upstart, vaguely turning towards a conception of the rights of humanity. On one side the hero of Albert Dürer, on the other, the friend of Leonardo da Vinci.

At the same time, one notices the resemblance that unites the two men, a resemblance in one point, but a capital one: disenchantment for the known, and passion for new ideas. That Emperor of Germany and that Duke of Milan, both shaped by

the discipline and teaching of the fifteenth century, experience the nostalgia of the modern soul in the midst of a Europe still disturbed or satisfied by what frightened or astonished the crowds in the Middle Ages. They are not contemporaries of the ruling spirit of those times ; with all their qualities and weaknesses, they are contemporaries of ours. Dates in psychology have not the great importance attributed to them elsewhere. What really matters, is not the period in which one has lived, but the one in which one would like to have lived. As in a house there are some windows facing the east and others facing the west, so there are in any one century—some minds looking back to the Past, and others facing the Future. Ludovic the Moor and Maximilian belong to the latter group, as also the artists they loved and whose work haunts us as soon as we speak of them ; the two visionaries of the latter part of the fifteenth century and the commencement of the sixteenth, those great worried and worrying souls, wherein each generation that passes imagines it sees a little of its own reflection, with its desire and disenchantment ; the beauty of woman ; man's mastery of power and his knowledge of the secrets of Nature and the instinct of his being ; access to the marvellous realm of science, and the indefinite search for perfect knowledge ; the hesitation of Humanity and its vanity before the great problem : the *Joconde* or the *Melancholia*. . . .

As for Bianca, it must be admitted, no one thinks of her any more. . . . She was only a

mild and inconsistent doll, whom the hazard of birth and time made Empress of the Holy Roman Empire. History only notices her through a magnifying glass, because she was the Moor's niece and Maximilian's wife. She is a pawn—perhaps at the very most, a Queen—in the hands of those great chess players, that they move about on the European board, and almost as inert and unaware of the game they are playing as her sisters of ivory or ebony. An historical piece, perhaps, because the game in which she figured was a world game and the stake so colossal that the winning of it re-echoed to infinity. Thanks to her, or at least thanks to her marriage, Ludovic the Moor became Duke of Milan, and Maximilian a richer and therefore more powerful Emperor of Germany. Her money, if not her personality, assisted her a little to do what she did. To-day, there remains nothing of all those proud and clever constructions. The thing founded by Ludovic the Moor was destined to last six years, that founded by Maximilian four centuries ; the one finished in the Castle of Loches, the other in the Castle of Saint Germain. In the mind of the passer-by, attentive only to the forces and aspirations of the present day, they are almost parallel ruins, and the Moor takes as big a place in history as Maximilian ; greater, perhaps, in contemporary minds ; as far greater as Leonardo da Vinci is than Albert Dürer, for those are makers of faces who reveal to our curiosity the founders of Empire and save them from oblivion. Sometimes the latter's names are only mentioned

on account of the portraits they ordered to be painted, or the decorative pages they dictated. The soldiers of the New World, of whom an endless stream flowed, after the War, through the rooms of the Louvre that were freshly opened, raised their eyes towards that woman's profile and sometimes admired it for a short instant, with amused curiosity, without thinking that she was an Empress of Germany, the first sovereign of Austria—a symbol of the mighty Empire they had just been wrecking a while before.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE SFORZAS

Muzio Attendolo, called Sforza (1369–1424), married 4 times, and had 13 children, 7 of whom were legitimate, amongst them :

Alessandro, Lord of Pesaro,

and 6 natural, amongst them :

Francesco, Duke of Milan (who follows).

The said Francesco Sforza (1401–1466), Duke of Milan in 1450, married first Polissena Ruffa, who died in 1420, then Bianca Maria Visconti, and had 20 children, of whom 11 were natural, amongst them :

Polissena, married to Sigismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini.
Lucia, a nun.
Bianca Francesca, a nun at Cremona.
Giovanni Maria, Archbishop of Genoa.
Polidoro, Officer at the Papal Court.

and 9 legitimate children, the first by Polissena Ruffa, the others by Bianca Maria Visconti :

1. Polissena.
2. Galeazzo Maria, Duke of Milan (who follows).
3. Hippolita, married to Alphonso, Duke of Calabria, later King of Naples.
4. Filippo, married to Costanza di Bosio Sforza.
5. Sforza, Duke of Bari.
6. Lodovico Maria, called the Moor, Duke of Bari, later Duke of Milan, married to Beatrice d'Este (who follows).
7. Ascanio, a Cardinal.
8. Elisabetta, married to William of Montferrat
9. Octaviano.

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF FRANCESCO SFORZA, DUKE OF MILAN

A.—Elder Branch.

Galeazzo Maria (1444–1476), Duke of Milan in 1466, married to Bonne of Savoy, had 10 children, 6 of them natural, amongst whom were :

Caterina, later Countess of Forli, married first to Girolamo Riario, then to Giacomo Feo, then to Giovanni de Medici.

Octaviano, Bishop of Lodi.

and 4 legitimate children :

1. Gian Galeazzo (1469–1494), Duke of Milan in 1476, married to Isabella of Aragon (who follows).
2. Ermes, born in 1470.
3. Bianca Maria (1472–1510), married to Maximilian, King of the Romans, and later Emperor of Germany.
4. Anna (1473–1497), married to Alphonso d'Este, brother of Beatrice d'Este.

Gian Galeazzo (1469–1494), Duke of Milan in 1476, married to Isabella of Aragon, had 3 children :

1. Francesco, Abbé of Noirmoutiers (1490–1512), who left no posterity.
2. Hippolita, died in 1501.
3. Bona (1493–1557), married to Sigismond, King of Poland.

B.—Younger Branch.

Lodovico Maria, called The Moor (1451–1508), Duke of Bari, then Duke of Milan in 1495, married to Beatrice d'Este, had 6 children, of whom the two legitimate were :

1. Ercole, later called Massimiliano (1493–1530), Duke of Milan in 1512, who left no posterity.
2. Francesco (1495–1535), Duke of Milan in 1523, who left no posterity.

and 4 natural children :

By Bernardina de Corradis :

1. Bianca (1482–1496), married to Galeazzo de San Severino.

By Cecilia Gallerani :

2. Cesare.
3. Leone, Officer at the Papal Court.

By Lucrezia Crivelli :

4. Gian Paolo (1497–1535).

APPENDIX II

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE ARAGONS

Ferrante I of Aragon (1424–1494), King of Naples, married first to Isabella of Taranto, had by her 4 children :

Beatrice, married to Mathias Corvin, King of Hungary.

Alphonso (1446–1494), Duke of Calabria, then King of Naples (who follows).

Federico, King of Naples, died in 1504.

Leonora, married to Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara (who follows).

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF FERRANTE I OF ARAGON, KING OF NAPLES

A.—Alphonso (1446–1495), Duke of Calabria, later King of Naples, married to Hippolita Sforza, daughter of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, had 2 children :

Ferrante II (1468–1496), King of Naples, married to Giovanna of Aragon.

Isabella of Aragon (1741–1524), married to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan (1469–1494), grandson of Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan. She follows.

B.—Leonora of Aragon, sister of Alphonso, Duke of Calabria, later King of Naples, married to Ercole d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, had 4 children :

Isabella d'Este (1474–1539), married to Francesco Gonzague, Marquis of Mantua.

Beatrice d'Este (1475–1497), married to Ludovic the Moor, Duke of Bari, and later Duke of Milan.

Alphonso I, Duke of Ferrara (1476–1534), married first to Anna Sforza, then to Lucrezia Borgia.
Hippolito d'Este (1479–1520), Cardinal.

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF ALPHONSO OF ARAGON, KING OF NAPLES

Isabella of Aragon (1471–1524), sister of Ferrante II, King of Naples, married to her cousin, Gian Galeazzo Sforza, Duke of Milan, had 3 children :

Francesco (1490–1512), Count of Pavia, afterwards Abbé of Noirmoutiers.
Bona (1493–1557), married to Sigismond, King of Poland.
Hippolita (1494–1501).

INDEX OF NAMES REFERRED TO IN THIS VOLUME

HISTORICAL PERSONAGES, ARTISTS, AUTHORS, SCULPTORS, TOWNS, GALLERIES, CHURCHES, PALACES, AND WORKS OF ART

Abbiategrasso, 64, 78, 171, 200
Adda, G. d', historian, 38
Ady, Mrs., *see* Cartwright, Julia
Albizzi, Albiera degli, 85
Alexander VI, Pope, 174
Ambrosian, the Library of the, at Milan, 119, 121, 145, 160, 166, 168, 172, 179, 188
Anjou, Charles of, 152
Anna, Madonna, *see* Sforza, Anna
Annone, Castle of, 54, 170
Aragon, Alphonso of, King of Naples, 103, 122, 125
Aragon, Ferrante of, Father of Isabella of Aragon and King of Naples, 134, 144
Aragon, Isabella of, Duchess of Milan, 29, 33, 45, 60, 95, 119, 121, 123, 124, 128, 136, 140, 142, 143, 146, 148–169, 183, 200, 207, 209–212, 220
Aragon, Leonora of, Duchess of Ferrara and Mother of Beatrice d'Este, 71, 75, 127
Arcimboldi, Bishop of Milan, 207
Arconati-Visconti Collection at the Louvre, 52, 188, 194, 205
Arms, or Armorial Bearings, of the Sforzas, 35, 73, 89, 104, 109, 131, 205, 206, 208, 209
Austria, Margaret of, wife of Philibert the Handsome, Duke of Savoy, 245
Auton, Jean d', Chronicler, 38
Bargello, Gallery of the, at Florence, 121
Bari, Castle of, 152
Bari, Duchess of, *see* Beatrice d'Este
Bari, Duke of, Sforza, brother of Ludovic the Moor, 33
Barone, Jester to Beatrice d'Este, 142
Bavaria, Duke Albert of, called the Wise, 200, 201
Bayard, the Chevalier, 33, 246
Belgiojoso, Ambassador of Ludovic the Moor to the Court of Charles VIII, 176
Belle Ferronière, the, by Leonardo da Vinci, at the Louvre, 82, 93, 146, 188, 214
Bellincioni, the poet, 83, 84, 122, 160, 168, 192
Beltrami, Historian, 38
Bembo, Pietro, Cardinal, 162, 188
Bereguardo, a hunting rendezvous of Ludovic the Moor, 64
Bergamini, Ludovico, of Cremona, husband of Cecilia Gallerani, 39
Bilia, Paolo, Secretary of Isabella of Aragon, 141
Binasco, a hunting rendezvous of Ludovic the Moor, 64
Boltraffio, 120, 121, 154
Bonnivet, Admiral of France, 182
Bontempo, Giovanni, Ambassador of Maximilian of Austria, 205

Borgia, Lucrezia, Duchess of Ferrara, 194
Borromeo, Cardinal, the Gallery of, 166
Bramante, the Architect, 83
Brasca, Erasmus, 213, 220, 224, 226, 227, 231, 233, 236
Brera, Gallery, at Milan, 21, 45, 49, 50, 80, 188
British Museum, in London, 22
Brittany, Anne of, Queen of France, 54, 203
Brou, the Church at, 245
Brussels, Picture Gallery at, 57
Burgundy, Marie of, Archduchess of Austria, 203, 232, 240, 247, 248, 249

Caiazzo, Count Francesco Gian of, one of the San Severino Brothers, 174, 209
Caimi, Violante, 235, 236
Calco Tristano, Diplomat, 54, 108, 160, 194
Calmetta, Vincenzo, 83
Calvi, Felice, Historian, 193
Camera delle Torre, at the Castello, Milan, 87
Cappella Maggiore, in Sainte-Marie-des-Graces, 92
Cappello, Francesco, Messer, 72
Caradosso, the Goldsmith, 22
Carmagnola, Palace, or Dal Verme, Via Rovello, Milan, 39
Carri, Lodovico, Physician, 60, 129
Cartwright, Julia (Mrs. Ady), Authoress of *Beatrice d'Este* and of *Baldassare Castiglione*, 38, 77
Cadanova, Eugenio, 193
Castello Sforcesco, at Milan, 22, 29, 31, 35, 65, 79, 86, 87, 89, 90, 91, 99, 108, 121, 122, 124, 127, 130, 141, 142, 146, 147, 154, 171, 180, 194, 195–200, 205, 209, 212–214, 231, 243
Castiglione, Balthazar, 85
Cartosa, *see* Chartreuse of Pavia
Charles the Bold, 203, 249
Charles V, 246
Charles VI, King of France, 206
Charles VIII, King of France, 33, 54, 78, 98, 103, 109, 134–140, 144, 145, 150, 168, 170, 175, 203, 228, 239, 241
Chartreuse of Pavia, 21, 22, 44, 46, 92, 115, 121, 250
Chasses de Maximilian, by Van Orley, 232
Commynes, Phillippe of, Sieur of Argenton, 38, 80, 107, 122, 133, 136, 139, 194, 198, 202, 203, 206.
Contarini, Taddeo, 166
Conti, Bernardino dei, 21, 49, 121, 149, 188
Cordier, Messer, the Singer, 71, 75
Corio, Bernardino, the Historian, 38, 141, 194
Cornaro, Catherine, Queen of Cyprus, 77
Corradis, Bernardina de, Mother of Bianca Giovanna Sforza, 168, 171
Corregio, Niccolo da, 53, 83, 171
Corte, Bernardino da, 100
Corte, Ducale, the, in the Castello of Milan, 31, 38, 132, 146, 153, 195, 197
Cortegiano, the, of Balthazar Castiglione, 26, 85, 174
Corbin, Mathias, King of Hungary, 201
Costa, Lorenzo, Painter of Isabella d'Este, 21, 167
Costabilis, Antonius, Ambassador of Ferrara, 87, 90
Cotignola, 206
Courajod, Historian, 26
Cristoforo, Johan, Author of the Bust of Beatrice d'Este in the Louvre, 26
Crivelli, Lucrezia, 82, 93, 146, 214
Crucifixion of Montorfano, 22
Cusano, Niccolo de, Doctor of Isabella of Aragon, 141
Cusago, 22, 64, 82, 177, 178

Dante, 83, 102, 225
Delaborde, H. Francois, Historian, 38, 122

Devices of the Sforzas, *see* Arms
Dioda, 177
Dome, *see* Milan Cathedral
Duchetto, the, *see* Sforza Francesco
Dürer, Albert, 218, 226, 250, 252

Emblems of the Sforzas, *see* Arms
Ermes, Marquis, 89, 209
Este, Don Alphonso d', Duke of Ferrara, 67, 71, 75, 153, 194
Este, Beatrice d', Duchess of Bari, afterwards Duchess of Milan, 16, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 36, 38, 40, 44–52, 54, 55, 59, 60, 63, 66, 68, 74, 76–87, 90–94, 110, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116, 126–132, 138, 142, 144, 146, 153, 160, 165–173, 177, 183, 188, 207, 208, 212, 220, 221, 240
Este, Ercole d', Duke of Ferrara, 23, 28, 87
Este, Isabella d', Marquise of Mantua, 26, 28, 40, 41, 44, 53, 54, 66, 67, 77, 80, 83, 84, 85, 99, 110, 119, 120, 171, 177, 208, 212

Federigo, Cardinal, one of the San Severino Brethren, 174
Feordelise, Madonna, natural daughter of the Duke Francesco Sforza, 210
Fojana, Messer Ludovico de, 209
Fracasse, Captain, one of the San Severino Brethren, 174
France, Marguerite of, 248
Francois I, King of France, 155, 182
Frederick, Emperor of Germany, 202
Freibourg-in-Brisgau, 247

Gabinetto Leonardo, Ambrosian Library, Milan, 119
Gaffurio, Franchino, Musician, 179
Gallerani, Cecilia, Countess Bergamini, 38, 39, 80, 81, 93, 214
Galliate, 64, 66
Genoa, Campo Santo at, 27
Genouillac, Jacques de, 182
Gerard, David, 57
Gherardi, Papal Nuncio, 180
Girolamo, 71
Giuliano the Magnificent, de Medicis, 85
Giulini, Alessandro, 160
Gobbo, the, *see* Cristoforo Solari, Sculptor surnamed
Gonzague, Francesco, the Marquis of Mantua, Husband of Isabella d'Este, 28, 87, 110
Gonzague, Madonna Elisabetta, sister of the above, Duchess of Urbino, 71, 80, 83
Gravedona, 224
Grimani, Antonio, Ambassador of Venice, 170
Guichardin, Historian, 122

Hapsbourg, Catherine of, Countess of Tyrol, Wife of Sigismund, 230
Hapsbourg, Frederick of, *see* Frederick, Emperor of Germany
Hapsbourg, Philip of, Archduke, Husband of Jeanne the Mad, 245
Hapsbourg, Maximilian of, Emperor Of Germnay, *see* Maximilian
Hapsbourg, Sigismund of (Siegmund), Archduke, Count of Tyrol, 230, 248
Hohenstaufen Frederick II of, 152
Humad, Count of, Natural son of Mathias Corvin, 201
Hungary, Elisabeth of, 248

Imola, Countess of, or Catherine Sforza, 236
Innocent VIII, Pope, 180

Jeanne the Mad, Archduchess of Austria, wife of Philip the Handsome, 245, 246
Joconde, the, Painting by Leonardo da Vinci, 251
Jorba, Master Embroiderer to Beatrice d'Este, 52

Lando, Count Conrad of, 209
Landriano, Treasurer to Ludovic the Moor, 99, 147, 213
La Palisse, Marshal of Chabannes, 246

Laurana, 16
Leonardo da Vinci, *see* Vinci
Loches, Castle of, 98, 101, 115, 154, 181, 244, 252
Lomazzo, Gian Paolo, 192, 194
Lombardo, Cristoforo, Medallist, 121
Louis XII, King of France, 78, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 146–151, 182, 241
Louvre, Gallery of the, 16, 21, 51, 52, 85, 114, 120, 187, 188, 192, 196, 205, 208, 216, 222, 230, 249, 253
Luini, Bernardino, 22, 121, 161
Luzio, A., Historian, 38
Luzio, A., and Renier, R., Historians, 38, 193

Machiavelli, 103, 106, 194, 233, 234, 242
Maffeo, Intimate of Bianca Maria Sforza, Empress of Germany, 233
Magenta, Carlo, Historian, 38, 122, 160
Majano, Benedetto da, 16
Malaguzzi Valeri, Francesco, Historian, 30, 38, 59, 122, 160
Malatesta, Sigismund, 16
Malatesta, Robert, 16
Malipiero, Historian, 38
Mantua, 40, 54, 67, 84, 99
Mariolo, Jester of the Court of Milan, 67, 68
Massimiliano, formerly called Ercole, eldest son of Ludovic the Moor and Beatrice d'Este, *see* Sforza, Ercole
Maulde, R. de, Historian, 194
Maximilian of Hapsbourg, King of the Romans and later Emperor of Germany, 52, 70, 95, 99, 104, 108, 138, 143, 166–170, 181, 188, 191, 192, 202, 203, 208–212, 218, 220, 225–228, 230–235, 240–246, 248–252
Mayno, Giasone del, Legist, 213, 220, 223
Medici, Peter de, 109
Melancholia, the Picture by Albert Dürer, 251
Melchiorre, Gaspar, Bishop of Brixen, Ambassador of Maximilian, 204
Melzo, Count of, 209
Memling, 57
Michael Angelo, 16
Michael Angelo Room at the Louvre, 16, 21, 114, 222
Michela, Madonna, 224
Michieli, Mark Antonio, 166
Milan, Cathedral of, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212
Milan, the town of, 30, 46, 49, 78, 79, 87, 99, 104, 114, 119, 120, 121, 126, 127, 159, 178, 194, 195, 204, 208, 209, 210, 212, 236, 238, 243
Modena, 30
Monte, Pietro, Master-at-Arms, 175
Montferrat, Duchess of, 126
Montorfano, the Crucifixion of, 22
Monza, Antonio de, 49
Moreri, Historian, 182
Morosini, Mark, Ambassador of Venice, 170
Muratori, Historian, 38

Negri, Niccolo de, 71
Noirmoutier, the Abbé de, *see* Sforza, Francesco, the Duchetto
Novara, 78, 100, 146

Orleans, Duke of, *see* Louis XII

Pallavicino, Messer Galeazzo, 209
Pallavicino, Pier Scipione, 220
Pasolini, Count Pier Desiderio, Historian, 38
Pavia, the Castello and Town of, 36, 43, 64, 99, 115, 135, 141, 150, 169, 177, 183
Pecorara, La, the farm near the Sforcesca, 68
Pelissier, Leon, Historian, 38, 122, 193
Petrarch, 83
Philibert I, Duke of Savoy, *see* Savoy, Duke of
Pistoia, Le, Poet, 96

Pitti Palace, at Florence, the residence of the Medici, 21, 50, 51, 85, 167, 188
Pollajuola, 172
Predis, Ambrogio de, 21, 49, 52, 141, 160, 167, 188, 191, 192, 230, 231, 234
Pusterla, Baldassare, surnamed the "Fabulator," 220
Pusterla, Gaspare de, 48

Raphael, 59
Reims, the Cathedral of, 169
Riccardi, a Palace of the Medici, 63
Rocchetta, the, in the Castello of Milan, 31, 38, 40, 86, 105, 144, 147, 197, 199
Romano, Cristoforo, Sculptor, 16, 21, 83, 114, 167
Rosate, Ambrogio da, Astrologer to Ludovic the Moor, 173, 223, 236
Rosmini, Historian, 38

Saint Ambrose Ad Muros, Church of, Milan, 49
Sainte-Marie-des-Graces, Church at Milan, 22, 48, 81, 86, 89, 114, 132
Saint-Gelais, Octavian de, Poet, 38, 122
Saint Mark, at Venice, 69, 75
Sambin, Hugues, 194
San Severino, Cardinal of, 68
San Severino, Galeazzo de, Husband of Bianca Giovanna Sforza, 55, 66, 67, 83, 86, 89, 109, 160, 166, 168, 171, 174–176, 179–182, 207, 210, 220, 240
San Stefano, Church at Milan, 33, 195, 196
Santa Barbara, by Boltraffio, at Berlin, 122
Sanuto, Marino, 122
Savoy, Bonne or Bona of, Duchess of Milan, 123, 131, 135, 192, 197–200, 207, 213, 239
Savoy, Philibert I, Duke of, called the Handsome, 200, 245
Schavezi, 52
Schifanoia, the, Palace of the d'Estes at Ferrara, 63
Schickler Collection, 21
Sforza, Anna, first wife of Alphonso d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, 71, 75, 194
Sforza, Ascanio, brother of Ludovic the Moor, 33, 103
Sforza, Madonna Bianca Giovanna de San Severino, Natural Daughter of Ludovic the Moor, 55, 61, 86, 109, 146, 148, 160, 166–171, 174, 175, 177–179, 182, 183, 188, 210, 239
Sforza, Visconti, Bianca Maria, Queen of the Romans, Empress of Germany, 52, 53, 95, 124, 166–172, 188, 191–200, 203–209, 214, 216, 217, 220–223, 236, 239–251
Sforza, Bona, Daughter of Gian Galeazzo and Isabella of Aragon, Queen of Poland, 149, 152–155
Sforza, Catherine, Countess of Imola, Natural Daughter of Galeazzo Maria Sforza, 174, 195, 243
Sforza, Cesare, Natural Son of Ludovic the Moor and Cecilia Gallerani, 80, 81
Sforza, Ercole, later Massimiliano, Count of Pavia, 48, 79, 95, 130, 133, 145, 154, 155, 244
Sforza, Ermes, Son of Galeazzo Maria Sforza and Bonne of Savoy, 194, 197, 205, 220
Sforza Visconti, Arms of, *see* Arms.
Sforza, Philippo, 33
Sforza, Francesco, the Condottier, Duke of Milan, 28, 34, 205, 206, 208
Sforza, Francesco, the Duchetto, Eldest Son of Gian Galeazzo and Isabella of Aragon, 126, 130, 136, 143, 145, 147, 149, 153, 155
Sforza, Francesco, second Son of Ludovic the Moor and Beatrice d'Este, Duke of Milan, 79, 166, 244
Sforza, Galeazzo Maria, Duke of Milan, 32, 123, 192, 193, 195, 196

Sforza, Gian Galeazzo, Duke of Milan, 29, 33, 111, 121, 123, 124, 126, 133, 135, 137, 140, 170, 180, 194, 196–200, 205, 213, 220, 238
Sforza, Gian Paolo, Natural Son of Ludovic the Moor, and Lucrezia Crivelli, 82
Sforza, Ippolita, Queen of Naples, 122
Sforza, Ippolita, Daughter of Isabella of Aragon, 152, 153
Sforza, Ludovico Maria, surnamed the Moor, Duke of Bari, later Duke of Milan, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33–34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44, 49, 51, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 64, 67, 68, 69, 70, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 87, 88, 90, 92–101, 103–114, 123–128, 131, 133, 134–136, 138–141, 143–147, 149–152, 154, 160, 167, 168, 169, 171, 173, 175, 176, 178, 180, 181, 182, 192, 193, 197–199, 203, 205, 207, 213, 220, 221, 227, 228, 231, 235, 238–244, 249–252
Sforza, 1496 MS., 22
Sforza, Ottaviano, Brother of Ludovic the Moor, 33
Sforza, Palace of the, near the Cathedral at Milan, 147
Sforcesca, la Pala, Painting by Zenale, in the Brera Gallery at Milan, 21, 49, 80
Sforcesca, the model farm of the, 64, 68
Sigismund I, King of Poland, 155
Simonetta, the Fair, Cattanei, Wife of Marco Vespucci, 85, 161, 172
Simonetta, Cico, Statesman, 198, 199
Sixte IV, Pope, 197
Solari, Cristoforo, surnamed the Gobbo, 21, 92, 167
Stanga, the Marchesino, Intimate of Ludovic the Moor, 16, 222
Strigel, Painter to Maximilian, Emperor of Germany, 192, 230, 241
Strozzi, Filippo, 16
Strozzi, Marietta, 85
Symbols of the Sforzas, *see* Arms

Tassino, Antonio, 198, 199
Terzigo, Palace of the, 169
Thiers Room at the Louvre, 188
Titian, 59
Tornabuoni, Giovanna degli Albizzi, Wife of Lorenzo Tornabuoni, 85, 161
Torniello, Count Manfredo, 209
Torno, on the Lake of Como, 221
Treasure Tower, or Silver Room in the Castello at Milan, 31, 65, 105, 216
Tremouille, Marquis de la, 100, 182
Trent, the Cathedral of, where Maximilian was crowned Emperor 246
Trevisano, Mark, Ambassador of Venice, 97, 98, 101, 114
Trivulce, Marshal, 99, 110, 176
Trivulce Collection at Milan, 35
Trivulzio, Antonio, Bishop of Como, 221
Trotti, Ambassador of Ferrara, at the Court of Ludovic the Moor, 43, 60
Trotti, Bentivoglio, Collection of the Marquis, 121
Turmann, 101, 148

Uffizi, Gallery of the, at Florence, 22, 121
Ulysses Room at the Pitti Palace, Florence, 21, 50
Uovo, the Fortress of the, at Naples, 122
Urbini, 83
Urfe, Pierre d', 182
Ursino, Lord, 71
Uzielli, G., Historian, 38

Van Orley, creator of the Tapestries, "The Hunting of Maximilian," 232
Vatican, Gallery at the, 149
Venice, the Academy of, 191
Venti, Girolamo, Ambassador of Naples, 236

Verme, Dal, Carmagnola Palace at Milan, 39, 40
Verme, Francesca del, 89
Vienna, the Imperial Museum at, 191
Vienna, Gallery at, 191, 231
Vigevano, 42, 43, 47, 53, 60, 64, 68, 78, 90, 95, 128, 129, 146, 149, 170, 212
Villanova, 66, 79
Vinci, Leonardo da, Painter to Ludovic the Moor, 22, 26, 39, 42, 58, 64, 65, 82, 83, 86, 119, 120, 121, 160, 175, 181, 201, 205, 219, 250, 252
Visconti, Family of the, Dukes of Milan, 35, 205, 206
Visconti, Gasparo, poet, 83, 96, 220
Visconti, Gian Galeazzo, 206
Visconti, Messer, 71
Visconti, Ottone, 206
Voghera, Castle of, 169

Wallace Collection at London, 123
Wedding at Cana, by Veronese, in the Louvre, 43
Widener Collection, 192

Zenale, 21, 49, 167

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